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THE NEW YORKER

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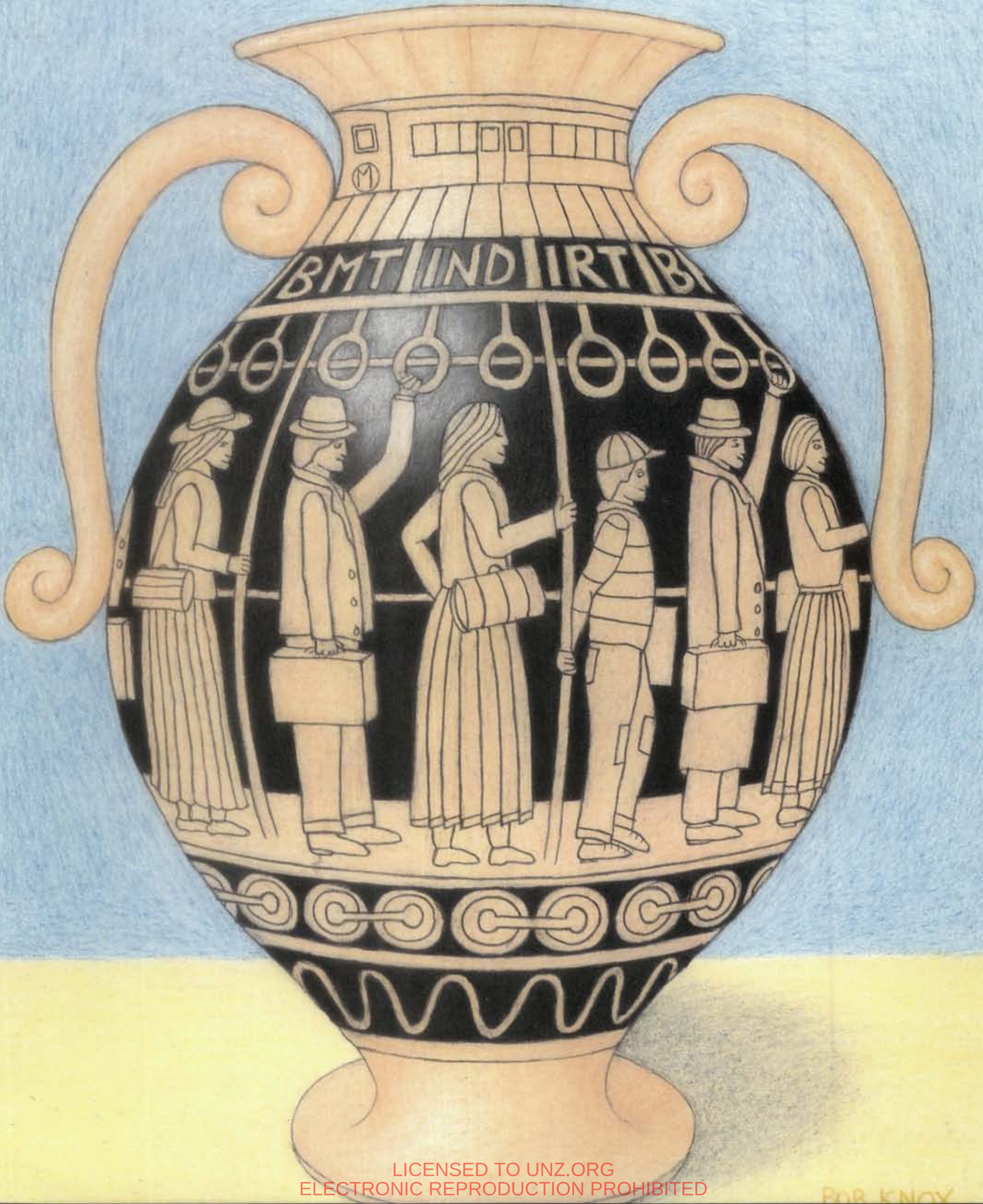
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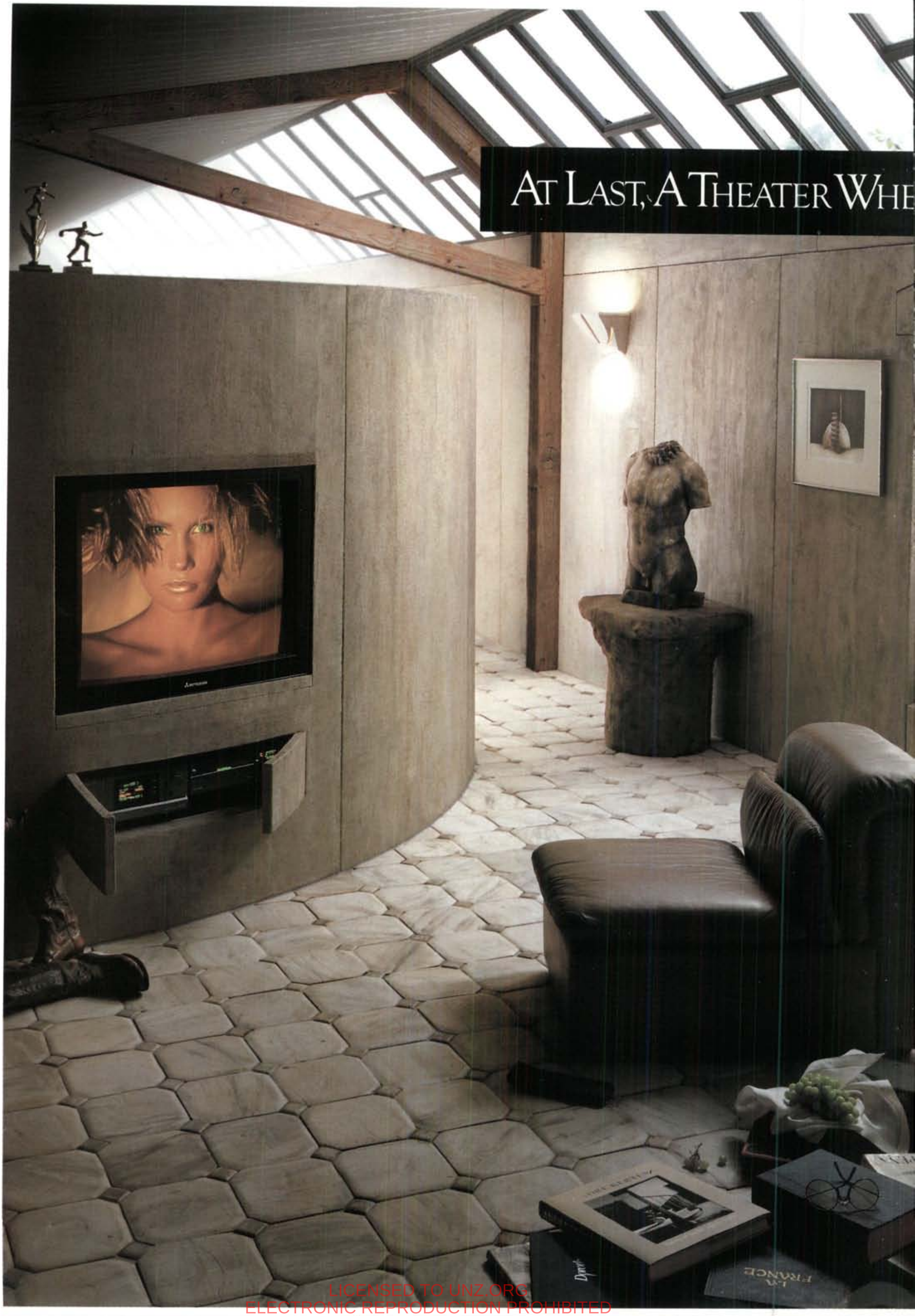
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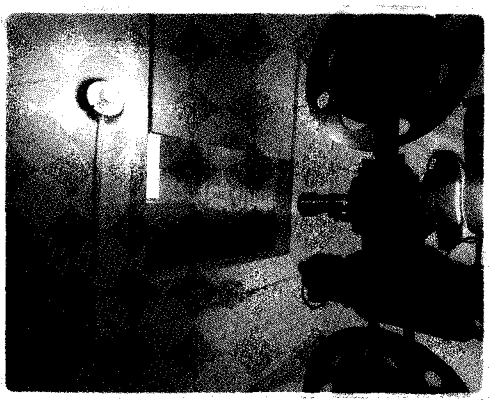

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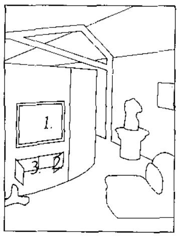

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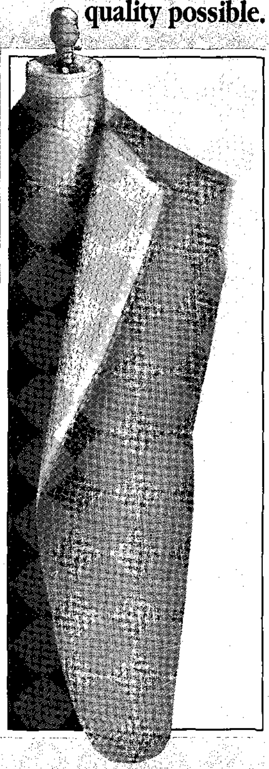

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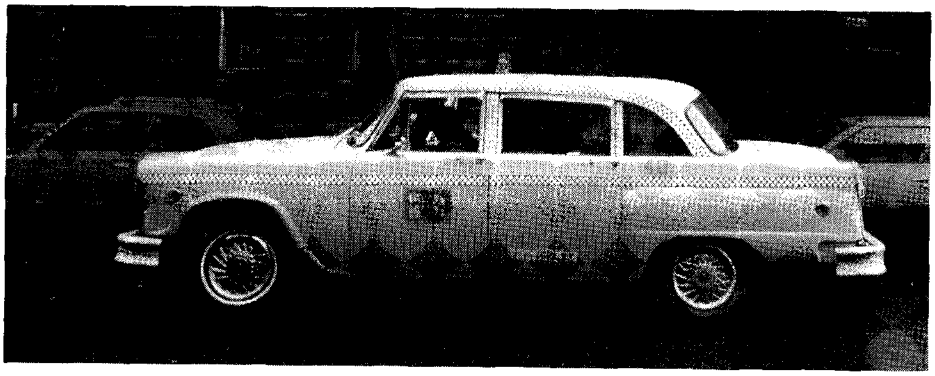

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

At the end of a week that had included more than the usual quota of commercial schlock (see within), we went off to two Pinter plays at the Classic Stage Company, quite looking forward to all that worthy grimness. The double bill, which runs through December 23, consists of a revival of the production of "The Birthday Party" that CSC presented two seasons ago, with one important cast change (Jean Stapleton in the role of Meg), and the American première of a new play, "Mountain Language." The latter work, a twenty-minute dramatization of the ills of living in a totalitarian state, is a bit disappointing: it doesn't tell us anything we don't know already, nor, for that matter, does it seem very different in content from the trio of Pinter one-acts produced at the Manhattan Theatre Club some years back—"A Kind of Alaska," "Victoria Station," and "One for the Road"—which also touched on ideas about totalitarianism, language, and terror-induced aphasia.

Both plays are directed by Carey Perloff, and we were struck, as we had been last year, by her grasp of Pinter's idiom. The performances Perloff has drawn out of her cast, especially from Miss Stapleton and David Strathairn, are quite brilliantly complex—even more so than last season, perhaps because most of the actors are coming back to something they are already familiar with, and thus have a chance for some fine etching. Only Peter Riegert seems monotonous and mechanical, as Goldberg, one of the two mysterious interlopers who arrive at the seaside boarding house of Meg and Petey (Bill Moor) and proceed to terrorize their one guest, Stanley (Mr. Strathairn). Mr. Riegert is all affability. What's lacking in his performance is the menace beneath the affability that would be necessary in order for us to understand Stanley's aphasia.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Baba Goya—Estelle Parsons and her daughter Martha Gehman in a revival of Steve Tesich's 1973 comedy. Directed by Harris Yulin. Previews through Nov. 20. Opens Nov. 21 at 8. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

Brightness—A new work by Ping Chong. With five actors, three of whom do not speak. Preview Nov. 15. Opens Nov. 16 at 8. (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

The Circle—Rex Harrison, Glynis Johns, and Stewart Granger, who is making his Broadway début, star in a revival of Somerset Maugham's romantic comedy. Also with Roma Downey, Harley Venton, and Patricia Conolly. Brian Murray is the director. Previews through Nov. 19. Opens Nov. 20 at 6:45. (Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

City of Angels—A musical comedy by Larry Gelbart (book), Cy Coleman (score), and David Zippel (lyrics). Directed by Michael Blakemore. Previews begin Nov. 17. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde—Georg Osterman's version of the strange case, presented by the Ridiculous Theatrical Company. With Mr. Osterman, Everett Quinton, and Eureka, among others. In previews. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, One Sheridan Square. 564-8038.)

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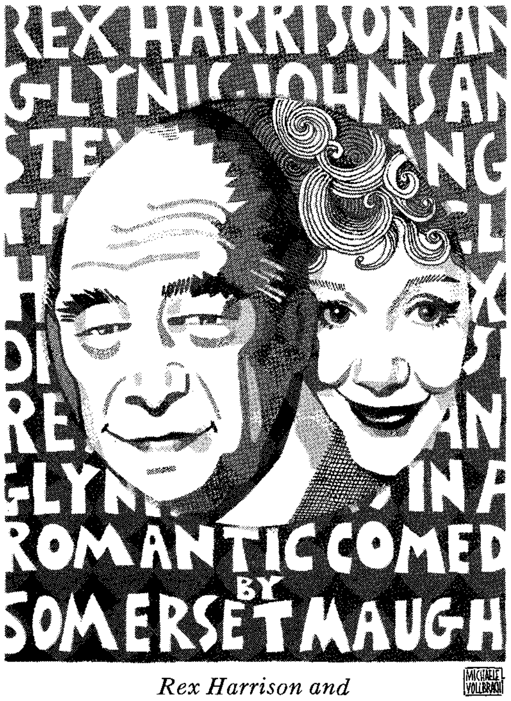

Rex Harrison and Glynis Johns in "The Circle"

A Few Good Men—Tom Hulce, Megan Gallagher, and Mark Nelson portray attorneys for two marines accused of murder, in this drama by Aaron Sorkin. Don Scardino is the director. Previews Nov. 13-14. Opens Nov. 15 at 6:15. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Gypsy—Tyne Daly stars in this revival of the 1959 musical. The score is by Jule Styne, the lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, and the book by Arthur Laurents, who is the director of this production. Also with Jonathan Hadary and Crista Moore. Previews through Nov. 15. Opens Nov. 16 at 6:30. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.)

Hyde in Hollywood—A play by Peter Parnell, with Robert Joy and Keith Szarabajka, that is the season opener for Playwrights Horizons. Directed by Gerald Gutierrez. In previews. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

Oh, Hell—A double bill consisting of Shel Silverstein's "The Devil and Billy Markham" and David Mamet's "Bobby Gould in Hell." With Dennis Locorriere in the Silverstein work and Treat Williams in the Mamet; both directed by Gregory Mosher. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

The Song of Shim Chung—An adaptation by Terence Cranendonk (with Du-Yee Chang) of a Korean folk tale. Produced by the Pan Asian Repertory Theatre. Opens Nov. 14 at 8, and runs through Dec. 2. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. For information about tickets, call 245-2660.)

The Tempest—Frank Langella, B. D. Wong, and Angela Sherrill as Prospero, Ariel, and Miranda. Opens Nov. 14 at 8. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883.)

The Tenth Man—A revival of Paddy Chayefsky's 1959 play, directed by Ulu Grosbard. The large cast includes Phoebe Cates, Bob Dishy, and Jack Weston. In previews. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Up Against It—A musical based on a screenplay that Joe Orton wrote for the Beatles in 1967. Adapted by Tom Ross, with music and lyrics by Todd Rundgren. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

RECENTLY OPENED

All God's Dangers—Cleavon Little is the true embodiment of Nate Shaw, an old Alabama farmer, who, in this monologue, tells his own story. The son of slaves, he prospered until he joined a sharecroppers' union and had to withstand the white man's deceptions and greed. Mr. Little does Mr. Shaw more than justice in a splendid performance. Adapted by Theodore Rosengarten (with Michael and Jennifer Hadley), from his book of the same title. Direction by William Partlan. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/30/89.) (Lambs, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

A Bronx Tale—A one-man play written and performed by Chazz Palminteri. Directed by Mark Travis. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

Chris Durang & Dawne—Mr. Durang and company play Tuesdays through Thursdays at 10:30. (Criterion Cabaret, Broadway at 45th St. 239-6200.)

Circle Repertory Company—**beside herself,** Joe Pintauro's play about a brittle, quirky-minded older woman making friends with different versions of her past self (and with a young man from the present) is alternately funny and poignant. It offers a chance to see Lois Smith in a part that might have been written for her and William Hurt giving an honest-to-God stage performance. (11/6/89) (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100. Closes Nov. 19.)

Closer Than Ever—This charmer amounts to an anthology of songs and sketches by Richard Maltby, Jr. (words), and David Shire (music), as sung and performed by Brent Barrett, Sally Mayes, Richard Muenz, and Lynne Wintersteller. They are a gifted quartet, and lucky to have such attractive, humorous, and tender songs to sing and words to speak. That there is no amplification is an additional boon. (11/13/89) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

Grand Hotel—A new musical, based on Vicki Baum's 1929 novel, that is directed and choreographed by Tommy Tune. Karen Akers, David Carroll, Michael Jeter, and Liliane Montevecchi are in the cast. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.)

Heaven on Earth—A play by Robert Schenkkan about a young Southerner who has no faith, and about his grandmother, who has plenty. With Jay O. Sanders and Helen Stenborg. (Reviewed in this issue.) (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

The Lady in Question—Charles Busch's new play, set in Germany during the Second World War, is the perfect entertainment for a cool autumn evening. It's less pointedly a parody of one genre or movie than his last work, "Psycho Beach Party," was, and more a travesty of an entire week's worth of TNT programming, compressed into a single evening of theatre. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Lend Me a Tenor—The setting of this farce by Ken Ludwig is a hotel suite in Cleveland in 1934, where a famous tenor who is booked to sing "Otello" takes an overdose of barbiturates. A substitute must be found. Under Jerry Zaks' direction, all the surprises up the dramatist's sleeve are brought to comic life. Philip Bosco, Victor Garber, Tovah Feldshuh, J. Smith-Cameron, Ron Holgate, Jane Connell, and Jeff Brooks are among the members of the splendid cast. (3/13/89) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Lisbon Traviata—This superb production of Terrence McNally's play about two fanatical opera aficionados (Anthony Heald and Nathan Lane) was staged by John Tillinger, and originated at the Manhattan Theatre Club. Since its run there, McNally has recast the ending so as to make it more plausible, less melodramatic. The result is that the serious second half (in which we get a life-behind-the-façade look at one of the characters from the comic first act) now bears out McNally's over-all point, which is something about the unrealistic, contrived, and upper-register level on which these characters live. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

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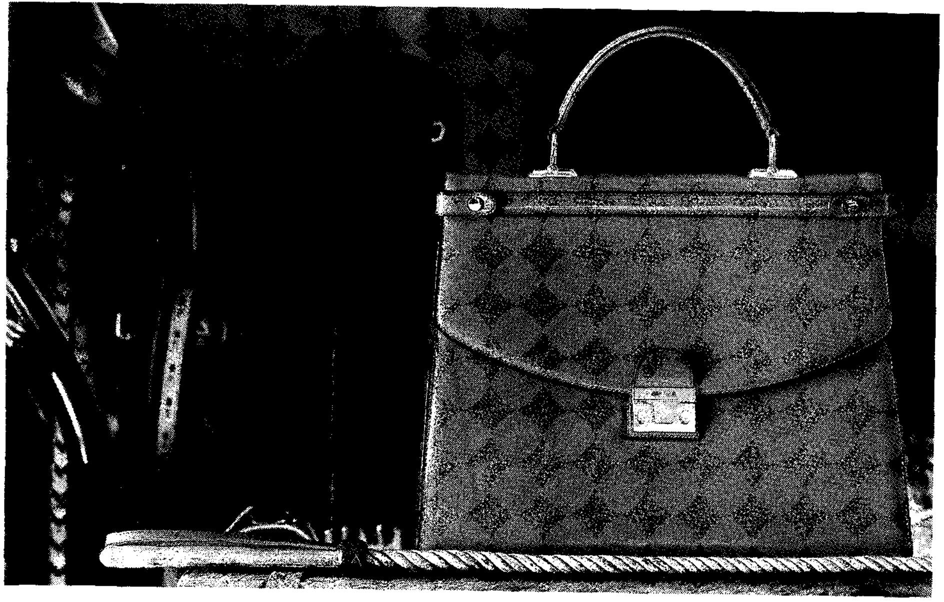

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THE THEATRE—Cont'd

Love Letters—A. R. Gurney's two-character play, with Swoosie Kurtz and Richard Thomas Nov. 14-19, and with Elizabeth Montgomery and Robert Foxworth starting Nov. 21. (Edison, 240 W. 47th St. 302-2302.)

Mastergate—Larry Gelbart's comedy, which takes off from the Iran-Contra hearings, doesn't quite achieve satire, but it does make for quite a lot of good jokes. The performance, under Michael Engler's direction, is excellent. (10/23/89) (Criterion Center Stage Right, Broadway at 45th St. 239-6200.)

Meet Me in St. Louis—George Hearn, Milo O'Shea, Charlotte Moore, and Betty Garrett in a new musical based on Sally Benson's "Kensington Stories" and on the 1943 movie. Directed by Louis Burke. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.)

Monster Time—Eric Douglas stars in this new play by Stephen DiLauro. Also with Tim Metcalf and Sara Jackson. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109. Closes Nov. 19.)

Mountain Language and **The Birthday Party**—A Harold Pinter double bill; the first is an American première, the second a revival of the 1958 play. Peter Riegert, Jean Stapleton, and David Strathairn are in both works, which are directed by Carey Perloff. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

Only Kidding!—Jim Geoghan's comedy about standup comedians, in all their panic and desperation, has the ring of authenticity, and jokes that invariably pay off. (One monologue, about a Greek restaurant, is a knockout.) All the actors do well, under the lively direction of Larry Arrick. (5/29/89) (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394.)

Orpheus Descending—A chaotic production of Tennessee Williams' ramshackle play about the passionate love affair between an Italian immigrant woman and a young man who goes from town to town, in the South, guitar in hand, making trouble. Vanessa Redgrave, though hardly convincing in the leading role, is certainly arresting. (10/9/89) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Prince of Central Park—A new musical, with Jo Anne Worley as a woman who befriends a twelve-year-old runaway (Richard H. Blake) living in a tree in Central Park. Adapted from a novel by Evan H. Rhodes. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Sweeney Todd—Bob Gunton and Beth Fowler in the York Theatre Company's production of the Sondheim musical, which had a brief run uptown last spring. Susan H. Schulman is the director. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

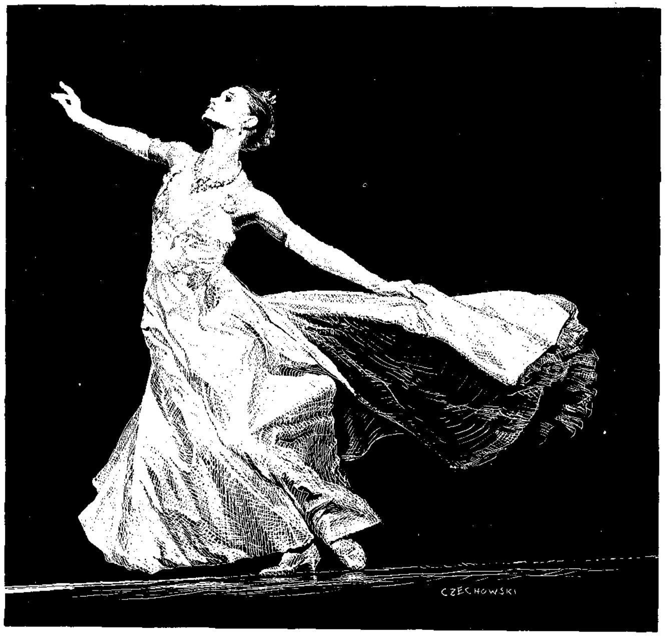
The Talented Tenth—Richard Wesley's new play about a black professional with a radical past. Directed by M. Neema Barnette; with Richard Lawson. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

3 Penny Opera—Pop singer Sting makes his Broadway début in this revival of the Brecht-Weill musical, which is directed by John Dexter. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 246-0102.)

The Widow's Blind Date—A new play written and directed by Israel Horovitz. The cast is composed of Christine Estabrook, Paul O'Brien, and Tom Bloom. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

LONG RUNS

BLACK AND BLUE: An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while Ruth Brown, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, Bunny Briggs, Jimmy Slyde, and a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **A CHORUS LINE:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **DRIVING MISS DAISY:** Frances Sternhagen and Arthur French star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run turned twenty-nine this year. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1989:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **THE HEIDI CHRONICLES:** Wendy Wasserstein's play looks at first glance like standard baby-boom playwriting fare, but some alchemical combination of graceful-mindedness and good writing enables her to capture, lampoon, and transcend her generation all at the same time. With Christine Lahti. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **JEROME ROBBINS' BROADWAY:** A collection of high spots from "On the Town," "Billion Dollar Baby," "High Button Shoes," "The King and I," "Peter Pan," "West Side Story," "Gypsy," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and "Fiddler on the Roof," all of which were choreographed or directed, or both, by Jerome Robbins. Whether Robbins' era—the fifties—was your generation or your parents', this is the show for you. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **THE KATHY AND MO SHOW: PARALLEL LIVES:** Comedy skits and vignettes about gender and its role in society, written and performed by Kathy Najimy and Mo Gaffney. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394.) . . . **M. BUTTERFLY:** Tony Randall and A. Mapa in David Henry Hwang's funny, mysterious, and often beautiful play. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220.) . . . **ME AND MY GIRL:** An infelicitously rehabilitated British musical out of the thirties. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York stockbroker's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **RUMORS:** This farce about a party to celebrate a couple's tenth anniversary (the host and hostess are mysteriously absent) may well be the funniest play that Neil Simon has written. Directed by Gene Saks. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **SHIRLEY VALENTINE:** Willy Russell's play about a Liverpool housewife who flies off to Greece, where she finds a temporary lover and lives happily ever after. With Ellen Burstyn in the title, and only, role. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **STEEL MAGNOLIAS:** This first play by Robert Harling takes place in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana and consists mainly of the often amusing, wisecracking chatter of the proprietress, her assistant, and four steady customers. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 246-0102.)



Suzanne Farrell in "Vienna Waltzes"

DANCE

A FEW years back, we were casting around for a book to take our mind off some strenuous sessions on an Exercycle, and so we became acquainted with "Les Illuminations" of Rimbaud. It was ideal: the poems required such concentration that we found we could bike for miles. We also found that no matter how fast we pedalled Rimbaud was making connections much faster. The French lines can sound ceremonial, even oracular, but the language has the fluid inner life of a daredevil travelling at top speed without baggage.

Only a choreographer like the late Sir Frederick Ashton, who heard poetry as music, would risk a ballet about such a subject. Ashton's "Illuminations," set to a Benjamin Britten song cycle of excerpts from Rimbaud, was made for New York City Ballet in 1950, part of an informal lend-lease arrangement with Sadler's Wells Ballet, from which Ashton had taken a leave. (Sadler's Wells got Balanchine's "Ballet Imperial.") "Illuminations" is made up of little enigmatic scenes—the Cecil Beaton costumes relate them to the world of Pierrot—in which the Poet figures as hero or prime mover of the dramatic action. The effect is of mime that verges on dancing, although only trained ballet dancers could attempt to sustain the pictorial tension. Gone are the extra-theatrical tensions that once surrounded this work: the wrangling of its creators, its alleged insults to royalty. Ashton's original Poet was Nicholas Magallanes, with Tanaquil LeClercq and Melissa Hayden as his Loves, Sacred and Profane. The Joffrey first staged its production of "Illuminations" in 1980. In its current City Center season, the company has programmed the work on an all-Ashton evening, with "Monotones I and II" (to Satie) and "A Wedding Bouquet" (to a Lord Berners score that incorporates lines by Gertrude Stein).

THE NEW VISION

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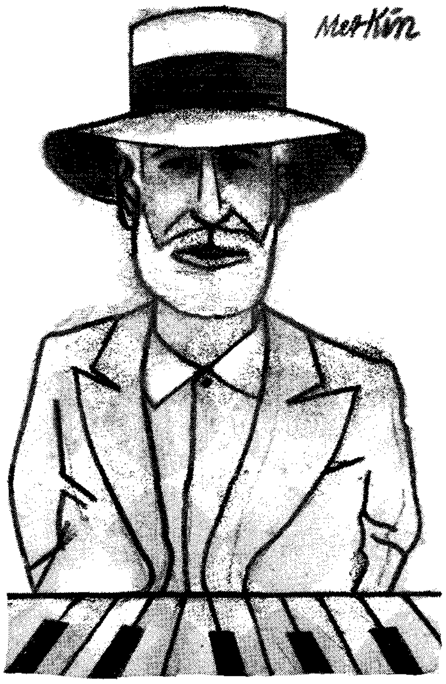
DANCE–Cont'd

New York City Ballet—The company's ninety-first New York season opens on Nov. 21, at 8, with benefit performances of "Walpurgisnacht Ballet," "Echo," and "Theme and Variations." The bill on Nov. 22, at 8, is "Echo," "In the Night," and "Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3." Performances of "Vienna Waltzes" are scheduled for Nov. 24 at 8; Nov. 25 at 2 and 8; and Nov. 26 at 7. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through Feb. 25.)

Joffrey Ballet—Nov. 14 at 8: "Italian Suite," "L'Air d'Esprit," "Touch Me," and "The Pantages and the Palace Present 'Two-a-Day.' " . . . ¶ Nov. 15 at 8: "Illuminations," "Monotones I and II," and "A Wedding Bouquet," with David Vaughan, narrator. . . . ¶ Nov. 16 at 8: "Italian Suite," "Sea Shadow," "Untitled," and "Les Noces." . . . ¶ Nov. 17 at 8: "Suite Saint-Saëns," "L'Air d'Esprit," "Touch Me," and "The Pantages and the Palace Present 'Two-a-Day.' " . . . ¶ Nov. 18 at 2: "Billy the Kid," "Round of Angels," "La Vivandière Pas de Six," and "Trinity." . . . ¶ Nov. 18 at 8: "Italian Suite," "Untitled," "Love Songs," and "The Pantages and the Palace Present 'Two-a-Day.' " . . . ¶ Nov. 19 at 2: "Billy the Kid," "Sea Shadow," "Touch Me," and "Trinity." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Through Dec. 2.)

Garth Fagan Bucket Dance—A two-week engagement. Program A: Nov. 14 at 7:30, Nov. 18 at 8, Nov. 19 at 2, and Nov. 22 at 8 . . . ¶ Program B: Nov. 15 and Nov. 17 at 8, and Nov. 19 at 7:30 . . . ¶ Program C: Nov. 16 and Nov. 21 at 8. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through Nov. 26.)

Suzushi and Suzusetsu Hanayagi—In Japanese classical dances. (Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742. Nov. 17-18 at 8.)



Mose Allison at Fat Tuesday's

NIGHT LIFE

"JUST point us to the bar and let us play," Jim Cuddy, of Blue Rodeo, told a reporter in June. The group had just released its second album—a solid, Nashville-inflected effort called "Diamond Mine," which was taken as further evidence that the best American music is now Canadian. Blue Rodeo has been increasingly visible ever since—they just did a bit in the movie "Postcards from the Edge," due out next year—and the other night the folks at the Lone Star Roadhouse had pointed them in the right direction.

Like k.d. lang and the Cowboy Junkies, the members of Blue Rodeo are veterans of Toronto's Queen Street club circuit. Onstage, as well as on record, Cuddy and his fellow-singer-guitarist Greg Keelor have a Lennon and McCartney kind of rapport: their styles are so different that in another band they might cancel each other out. Keelor is, in short, a shitkicker. He has Elvis Costello's vaguely strangled voice, not to mention Costello's most prized possession: indignation. Cuddy, on the other hand, is a perfect-pitch smoothie. Blue Rodeo's set at the Roadhouse (where the band will become regulars starting December 9) alternated nicely between Keelor's brash rock and Cuddy's straight-ahead country offerings. The one wild card was keyboardist Bob Wiseman, who seemed to have a little too much energy at his disposal. Usually a fine, intuitive player, Wiseman—in an effort to strut his jazz-improv credentials, maybe—took to banging the keys of his Acetone with, among other things, his feet, a drumstick, and a roll of electrical tape. The Roadhouse was flooded with denim-clad admirers, and while the rest of the band was busy burning the place down Wiseman's keyboard was producing the kind of random percussive booms usually heard just before someone shouts, "You sank my battleship!"

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—In the lobby, people come and go talking of the Forty-fourth Street Marching and Chowder Club, which used to meet here, and of Lerner and Loewe, who knocked out "My Fair Lady" here, and of **ANDREA MARCOVICCI**, who is singing in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Miss Marcovicci's theme is "Songs for the Hopeless Romantic," and she strings together numbers by Berlin, Porter, and others with her own running commentary on the highs and lows of amour. In deference to the setting, Dorothy Parker's name also comes up once or twice. Shows at nine-fifteen Tuesdays through Fridays and at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen Fridays and Saturdays.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A tony cabaret attained by passing through an opulent tapas restaurant, where wicker baskets overflow with fruit and vegetables and a row of Serrano hams hang over the bar; if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. **EARTHA KITT** takes up residence on Nov. 14. Last time we saw her here, she sang of men and money, did slithery dances, and made a lot of catlike noises.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—On the back wall of this jazz club there's a neon version of the Manhattan skyline, with a crescent moon and two stars attendant upon it—one of the best examples of inert-gas folk art we know of. **PIECES OF A DREAM**, a young Philadelphia jazz outfit that has been known to make forays into pop and funk, hold forth Nov. 14-19; a big band belonging to tenor saxophonist **ILLINOIS JACQUET** starts up Nov. 21. Music from nine.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A crowded, duskily lit neighborhood bar, where pianists, bassists, and, occasionally, drummers compete for your ear with professional conversationalists. Truth and beauty usually prevail. Pianist **BILL MAYS**, who has gone to the bench for Sarah Vaughan and Al Jarreau, among others, has a week-long gig with bassist **RAY DRUMMOND** Nov. 13-18; trumpeter **LEW SOLOFF** leads a trio on Nov. 19; and, as of Nov. 20, tenor saxophonist **GEORGE COLEMAN** will be here with pianist **HAROLD MABERN** and bassist **JAMIL NASSER**. First set at nine-forty-five. Dining.

Carlos I, 432 Sixth Ave., at 10th St. (982-3260)—Pretty much everything about this jazz room is nice: the long rows of tables covered with pink linen, the bijou bandstand, the view from the bar of the bandstand, and the view out the window of Vaux & Withers' gabled Victorian courthouse. **BENNY CARTER**, a saxophonist and composer who was the toast of the town before anyone had heard of Charlie Parker, is still at it. He's leading a group here through Nov. 19. Music from nine-thirty.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—In the late seventies and early eighties, this dark cave was the hub of a thriving punk-music scene—Blondie, Talking Heads, and Television were regular attractions. Local rock has since diminished, but while other clubs of the era have fizzled CB's perseveres, and young hopefuls continue to fill the stage nightly. The Athens, Georgia, group **PYLON** takes the stage on Nov. 15. Though later overshadowed by their fellow-Athenians R.E.M., Pylon, during a brief lifetime, made a lasting impression on the post-punk scene. The band's reincarnation began with a reunion gig last year. Music from nine-thirty on Sundays through Thursdays and from ten-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

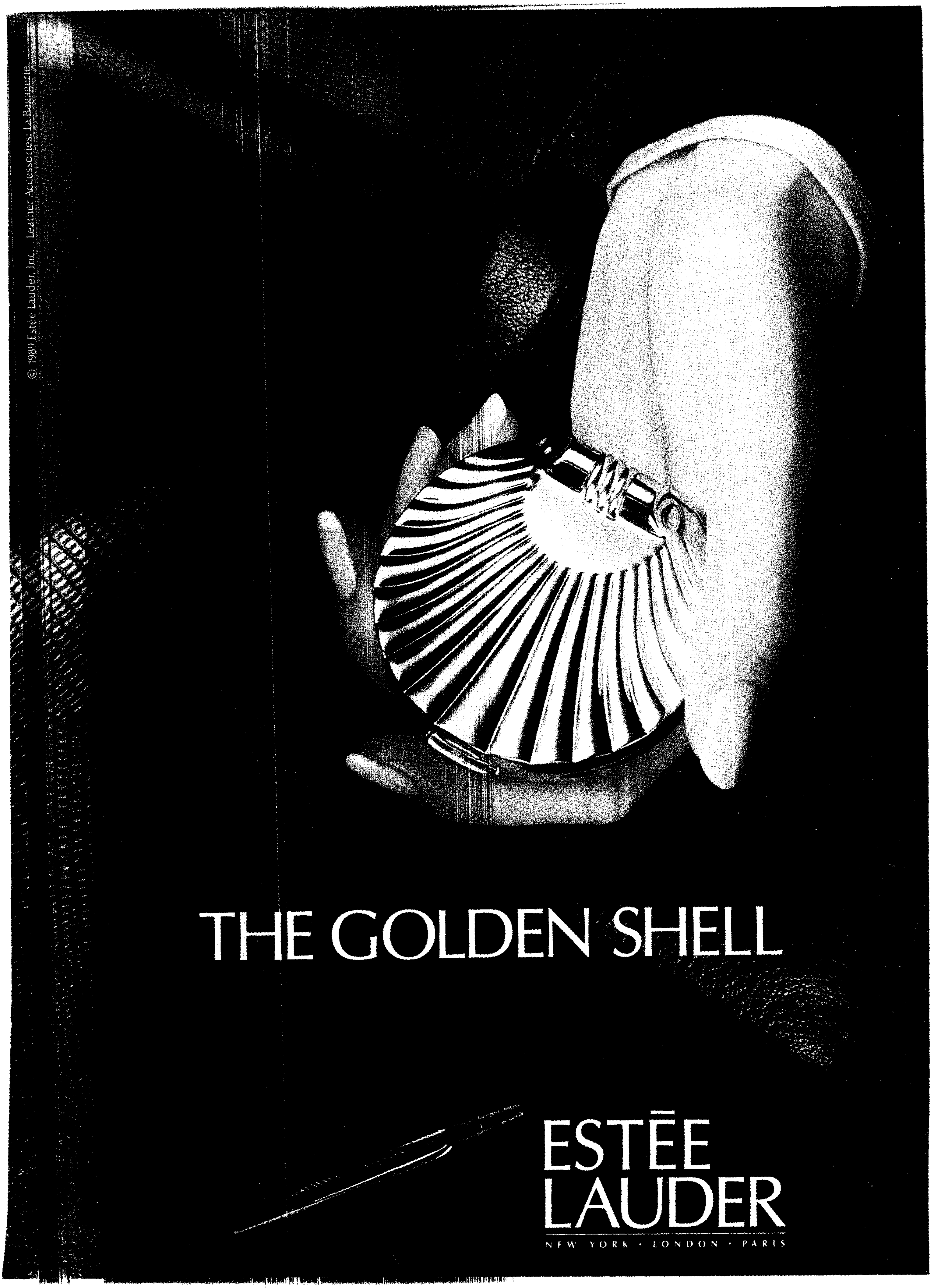
Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through a heavy-duty steel door, through a green Plexiglas door, down a long, narrow, fun-house passageway (mirrors in which you can watch yourself multiply; corrugated-metal siding you can riffle), and down a flight of stairs, you'll find this velvet-and-mirror-walled *boîte*. Bassist **RON CARTER**, who has appeared on over a thousand records and whose ensembles often feature duelling uprights, brings in his nonet Nov. 14-19. **MOSE ALLISON**, a jazz-blues singer, composer, and snappy lyricist, gets under way on Nov. 21. Mondays are set aside for guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL**, who was known as Rhubarb Red back in the twenties and thirties, when he was just an itinerant country picker. Music from eight.

Fortune Garden Pavilion, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—The kind of classy place where no sooner do they give you a plate than they take it away. Fortune Garden is decorated for a greenhouse effect and the priorities here are Chinese food, hanging plants, and jazz. The unflappable singer-pianist **RONNY WHYTE** will play in a trio Nov. 15-19; **NORMAN SIMMONS**—a Chicago-born pianist who was in residence at the Bee Hive in the early fifties—comes in for a week on Nov. 20, with **LISLE ATKINSON**. Music from eight Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

J's, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An unpretentious, second-floor jazz retreat where bandleaders have been known to say things like "I wanna introduce my drummer first on account of because he has to go put a quarter in the meter." The lineup: **CAROL BRITTO's** trio on Nov. 15; **JOHN PIZZARELLI's** trio on Nov. 16; **JUDY BARNETT's** quartet on Nov. 17; **KEN PEPLOWSKI's** quartet on Nov. 18; Kent Raine on Nov. 19; **DICK HYMAN** on Nov. 20; and Gary Haase's Conch Salad Band on Nov. 22. Music from eight-thirty Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Turn-of-the-century New York Sunday *Herald* posters and Hirschfeld caricatures on the walls, and, next to the brass-railed partition between the bar and the dining room, a modern Steinway. Pianist Russ Kassoff and bassist Chip Jackson perform Nov. 14-17; **BILLS MAYS** and **HARVIE SWARTZ** start up on Nov. 21. Music from nine-thirty.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—This upstairs music and performance space opened its doors in 1986 and quickly established itself as the headquarters of the downtown music scene. (There wasn't much competition.) In the rear there's a mini-bar stocked with herbal tea and imported beer; up front is a small stage, which has been claimed for the last couple of weeks by artists participating in the citywide festival New Music America. The British improv outfit Kahondo Style performs on Nov. 14; **MUSICA ELETTRONICA VIVA** will be here on Nov. 15; Negativland, a California-based group whose performances include snippets from radio and TV, come in on Nov. 16; and Graham Haynes performs on Nov. 17, along with Marc Ribot & Rootless Cosmopolitans. Music after nine.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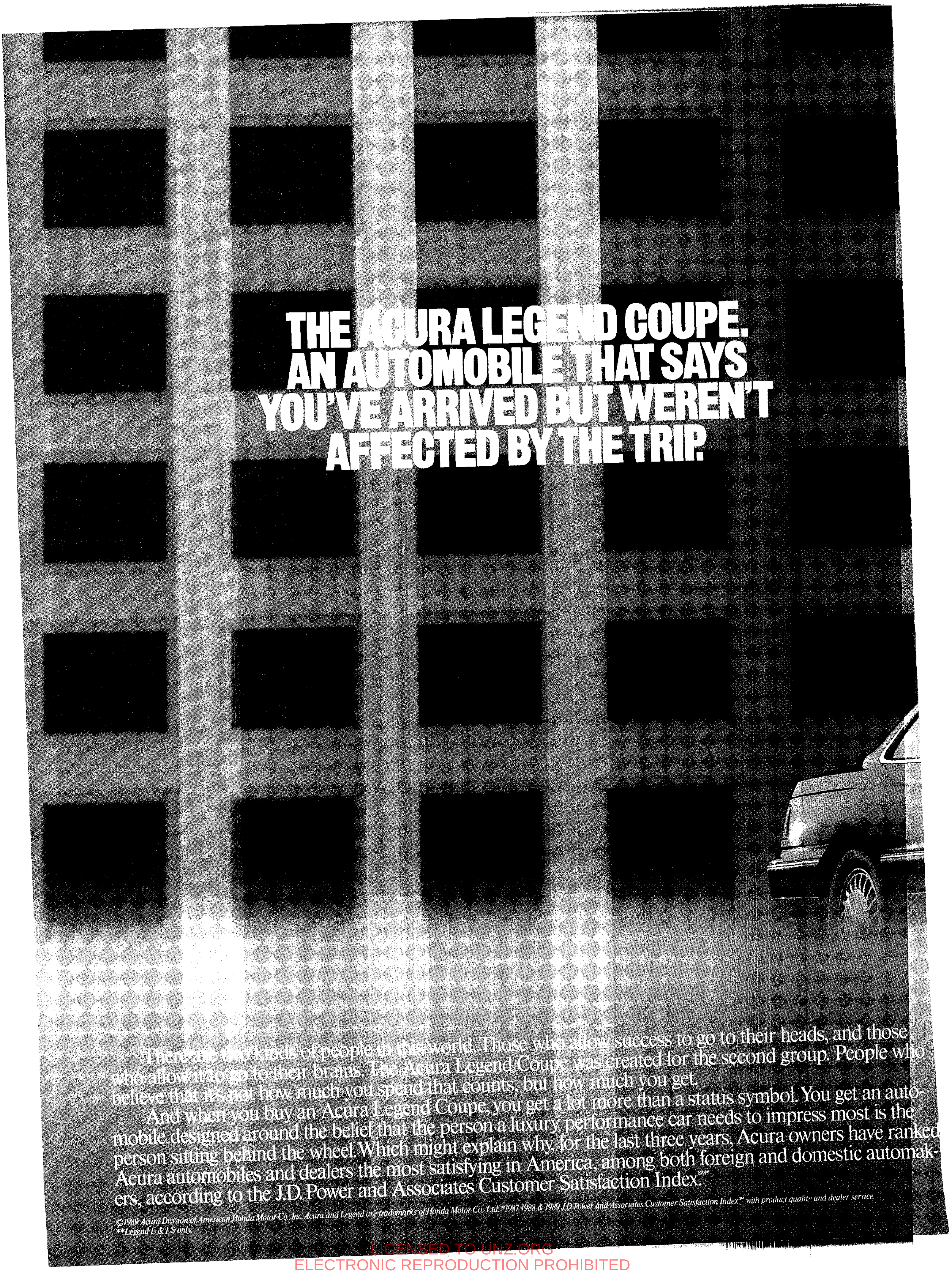

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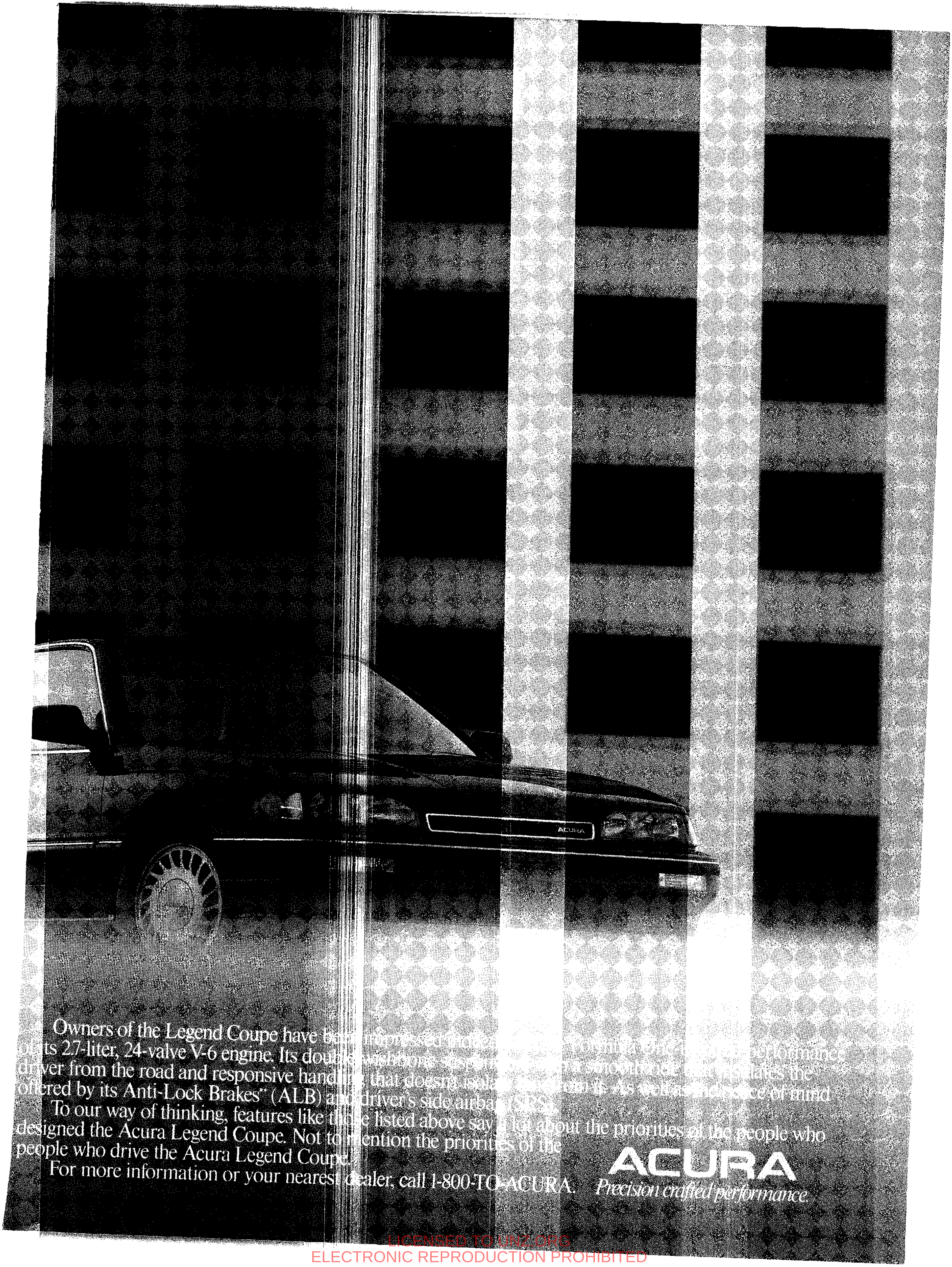

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John Barrymore and Mary Astor in *Don Juan* (1926).
Gene Kelly in *An American in Paris* (1951), Vincente Minnelli.
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NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

Lauterbach's Brooklyn Beat, 335 Prospect Ave., at Sixth Ave., Brooklyn. (1-718 788-9140)—A grungy but well-intentioned watering hole devoted to homegrown Brooklyn bands. The emphasis here is on exposed cement, although one wall is decorated with Polaroids—"St. Patty's 1986" (people in green hats and leis), "New Year's 1988-89" (people in red hats and leis). Lauterbach's microwave menu includes shepherd's pie and chicken parmigiana, but the musical menu, just as varied, is almost always a better bet.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—Henry VIII and a unicorn on the walls, well-heeled cats on the banquettes, and **MARIA MULDAUR** on the bandstand. Although best known for her seventies pop-folk hit "Midnight at the Oasis," Ms. Muldaur has since branched out into blues and jazz. The Bayou singer and accordionist **TERRANCE SIMIEN** and his work-hard, play-hard zydeco outfit, the **MALLET PLAYBOYS**, are also on the bill. Both are appearing through Nov. 20. **JOAN RIVERS** does a little standup on Nov. 15 and Nov. 22 at ten-thirty. Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine and eleven. Dining. Closed Sundays.

Ritz, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—This club, which recently moved from the East Village to the former temple of excess Studio 54, is still a place where the customer is not always right. **TEN YEARS AFTER**—a rock group known in the seventies for Alvin Lee's, well, *involved* guitar solos—show up on Nov. 16; the **BODEANS**—an acoustic-guitar-driven outfit from Wisconsin that was voted "Best New American Band" in *Rolling Stone* not long ago—perform on Nov. 17. On Nov. 22, the place belongs to the **PIXIES**, a beguiling thrash collective from Boston. Shows begin at nine Sundays through Thursdays, and at eleven Fridays and Saturdays.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—This former luncheonette has a tropical motif—straw huts, bamboo, a fake palm tree, a mosaic of gourds—and perhaps the city's most international booking policy: Brazil, Africa, and the Caribbean are just a few of the places explored. **NONA HENDRYX**, who, as a member of Labelle, in the seventies, wrote some funky R.&B. songs and also helped to promote the lamé industry, claims Nov. 21-22. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from ten Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A convivial and crowded jazz club—but not so crowded, as Yogi Berra said of another night spot, that nobody comes here anymore. Saxophonist **STANLEY TURRENTINE**—who, in 1953, had the somewhat mixed fortune of replacing John Coltrane in Earl Bostic's group—will be here Nov. 14-19; guitarist **KENNY BURRELL** starts up Nov. 21. Shows from ten. Dining.

Sweetwaters, 170 Amsterdam Ave., at 67th St. (873-4100)—Pink carnations on the tables, shrimp creole on the menu, a sunken dance floor with a "Saturday Night Fever" ball, and a house photographer who offers to take a picture of you and your lady. The stage is usually given over to soul and R. & B.; the audience shouts encouragement as the band sings about, for instance, "doin' it all night long" and "takin' care of that thing." There's a lively bar, too, separated from the dining room by tinted glass. The **MANHATTANS**—a street-corner-soul group from Jersey City who had their first hit, "I Wanna Be (Your Everything)," about the same time the Beatles had theirs—harmonize here Nov. 16-18.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—The old Tramps, a small Irish pub on East 15th Street, closed its doors last year, and this new incarnation, located on a Chelsea block that's fast becoming an urban Disneyland (a pool hall, indoor miniature golf, a trendy all-night diner, Limelight around the corner), opened early this year. The new place, about the size of a roller rink, has the converted-loft-space slickness much in evidence downtown lately, but the emphasis on solid rock and blues remains. Singer and guitarist **OTIS RUSH**, one of Chicago's leading bluesmen, is in action Nov. 17-18.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—One of the few places below the surface of New York that deserve landmark status. It's also one of the few places anywhere that have a notable (if that's the right word) light fixture—one that Charles Mingus K.O.'d while trying to reason with the late Max Gordon, and that Mr. Gordon, who was a preservationist as well as a businessman, decided to leave in Mingus-ized condition. Nov. 14-19 belongs to tenor saxophonist **DAVID (FATHEAD) NEWMAN**, whose long career has included a ten-year stint with Ray Charles. Pianist **DON PULLEN**, who can bop from bop to soul to free jazz, comes out punching on Nov. 21. Mondays are in the hands of the **MEL LEWIS** big band. Music after ten.

Zanzibar & Grill, 550 Third Ave., at 36th St. (779-0606)—The logo that appears on glasses, napkins, and matchbooks here—a bongo-playing monkey in fez and shades—embodies this pleasant restaurant-bar's blend of Africana and yuppie cool. The eponymous island is evoked by live palms, Rousseau-style murals, and etched-glass jungle scenes; Murray Hill is evoked by everything else. The schedule includes **PETE MALINVERNI & ZANZIBAND** on Nov. 14; the **JIMMY KNEPPER** quartet on Nov. 15; Skollie (with Anton Fig and Blondie Chaplin) on Nov. 16; and the **ROY GERSON** sextet on Nov. 17.

The Manhattans at Sweetwaters

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

THE audience at Delta 88 for one of the Benson & Hedges blues-festival concerts was praying that something extraordinary would happen. Linda Hopkins was sitting in our midst chomping away as if this meal were her final taste on unhallowed ground, but everyone knew she wasn't there simply because she was hungry. She'd come to hear Marva Wright sing. Wright is one more gospel-rooted blues singer with a voice as powerful as her forearm, a face almost wider than her range, and a faith that can shake her body up so bad you can hear the fringes on her black dress screaming in fear. But, unlike Nell Carter or Patti LaBelle, Wright doesn't say cutesy things like "Do you want to go to church?" She just takes you there.

For most of Wright's first set, Hopkins kept one hand firmly on her barbecued ribs and the other in the air, shouting sweetly barbed epithets every time Wright would bend her knees or sway her butt. "You should be ashamed of yourself, girl," Hopkins cried, and Wright would sway some more. But in the middle of the second set Wright stopped funnin' just as Hopkins stopped chewing and demanded that we all give a standing ovation to her "sister." As Wright hurled herself into the next number, audience members swivelled their heads as if they were watching Navratilova and Graf at Wimbledon. Then Wright announced she was dedicating her next number to Hopkins. It was a song Hopkins used to sing with Wright's mother. Wright wailed and walked and sailed off the stage, making her way toward Hopkins. They clutched hands, they shared the mike, they sang. They sang so hard the audience did not know whether to shut up and listen or scream their heads off with joy. And suddenly in a final burst these two women were gone, propelled by a spirit in the dark that took them out of the room, above the applause, out of this world.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY

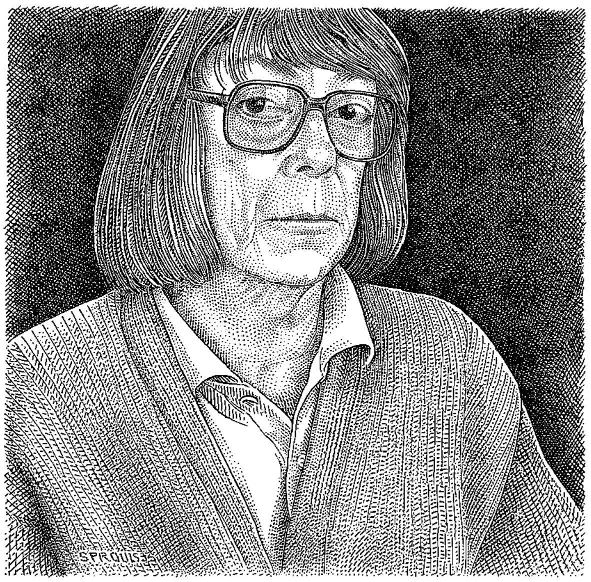
RENO's mind is free-ranging and dark. So are the roots of her hair. Peroxided tendrils dance as she erupts onto the stage and jabs the air in a dizzying whirl of movement. A guerrilla fighter in the gender wars and a hostage to urban surrealism, she isn't pious or smug—she's just outrageous.

HBO has taped a taut, fluid version of her off-Broadway solo performance "Reno in Rage and Rehab," which airs occasionally during the next two weeks; those who missed the downtown show can catch her now. She thanks Mayor Koch for purging midtown of knish salesmen—"I for one was having a very difficult time locating my crack dealer." When a young Wall Street woman in a "power bow" snubs her, Reno growls, "Like I'm supposed to be intimidated by someone who looks like Bozo." The comedian dismantles the kind of butch swaggering that expresses everything from love to disgust. And she's equally deft with femme clinging: "Where are you going? Outside? But why? I'm *here*." Like Whoopi Goldberg, Reno fashions an androgynous chic, garbed in her trademark black jeans and Reeboks. She doesn't apologize for her raunch or permit men to tip her balance. In these days when TV serves reassuring comedy for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, HBO, by backing Reno, spikes the menu with heat and disruption.

Big Apple Circus—Performances under the little big top in Lincoln Center's Damrosch Park continue through Jan. 7. For ticket and schedule information, call 391-0760.

Radio City Music Hall—Performances of the "Christmas Spectacular" (with the Rockettes, of course) will run through Jan. 3. (Sixth Ave. at 50th St. For information about show times and tickets, call 247-4777.)

Movies and Live Music—The Club Foot Orchestra, Geri Allen, and Gary Lucas and Walter Horn will play music to screenings of the silent movies "Nosferatu," "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari," "Scar of Shame," and "The Golem." (American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. 1-718 784-0077. Nov. 17, starting at 3, and Nov. 18, starting at 2.)



Joan Mitchell

ART

THE Met's Canaletto show, devoted to one of history's most repetitive artists, is way, way too big. In a dozen galleries we find, for the most part, eighteenth-century Venice looking perfectly like her Serenissima self. Those who know that city might want to entertain themselves with a little "What's wrong with this picture?" sort of game. In a view of the Grand Canal from the vantage of the piazzetta in front of Santa Maria della Carità, for instance, something seems to be missing. Of course! It's the Accademia bridge, which hadn't been built yet! On the few occasions we're not seeing Venice, it's London and environs we get—a London that looks an awful lot like Venice. In one painting, "London: the Thames and the City of London from Richmond House," the dome of St. Paul's is simply Santa Maria della Salute all over again.

An enterprising Irishman named Owen McSwiney got Canaletto to paint a great many views, some on copper, for a group of British clients that included the Duke of Richmond—paintings that were truly the precursors of postcards, for the landed few of a dog-, horse-, and lagoon-obsessed nation. A little Canaletto is great and it goes a long way. He was a brilliantly talented hack, and the occasional magical work, such as "S. Cristoforo, S. Michele, and Murano from the Fondamente Nuove, Venice"—an atypical, dark and moody view whose theatrical interpretation of weather and water almost suggests El Greco—only proves the rule.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—The Canaletto exhibit has more than a hundred and twenty paintings and drawings, twenty-nine from the collection of Queen Elizabeth II. Through Jan. 21. . . . ¶ A show giving ample evidence of Velázquez' genius as a portraitist. Through Jan. 7. . . . ¶ "The New Vision: Photography Between the World Wars." Through Dec. 31. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Picasso and Braque: Pioneering Cubism"—The show is truly dazzling, and those who think that Cubism is dry and overly intellectual, or who feel that seeing this show is part of their cultural *duty*, will be happily surprised to find it juicy as well. Not that it isn't demanding: twenty galleries, on two levels, full of paintings, collages, constructions, and drawings, wherein we follow the progress of the daring young men at their speediest, most intense, most symbiotically entwined. Through Jan. 16. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A retrospective of work by Mario Merz, a signal figure of the Arte Povera movement. Virtually everything in this exhibit—igloo structures, spiral tables laden with vegetables and fruit, the use of the Fibonacci numerical series of natural growth, and the evocative and flexible use of neon as a kind of cosmic ink—rhymes spatially with the building itself. It is a beautiful but one-note show. Through Nov. 26. (Open Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—The Thomas Hart Benton retrospective will contain more than ninety paintings from 1910 to 1970. In addition, three of the artist's mural cycles, one commissioned by the Whitney in 1932, will be displayed at the Equitable Center. Starts Nov. 17. . . . ¶ A survey of art that is directly influenced by mass-media messages. The exhibit will be installed in public places as well as at the museum. For instance, Dennis Adams' full-scale ticket booth is being used in the lobby, and, next week, Chuck Close, Jeff Koons, Lorna Simpson, and others will have their own messages mounted on billboards citywide. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—The twenty-fifth National Print Exhibition consists of eighty-two works by fifty artists and takes as its theme "projects and portfolios," which allows for some organizational creativity, but attempts to be too inclusive. Through Dec. 31. . . . ¶ Small Constructivistic compositions by Vladimir Zakrzewski, of geometric shapes in a wide variety of styles, are marvels of drawing but are disengaged from a contemporary dialogue and fail to convey a very strong individual vision. Through Dec. 4. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

AMERICAN ACADEMY AND INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND LETTERS, Broadway at 155th St.—A show of paintings, drawings, and prints by fifty-three contemporary artists. The Academy-Institute will buy a selection of the works and donate them to various museums throughout the country. Through Dec. 10. (Open daily, except Mondays, 1 to 4.)

AMERICAN CRAFT MUSEUM, 40 W. 53rd St.—A show of works by George Ohr (1857-1918), the Mad Potter of Biloxi, who called his pots "mud babies" and was so full of himself that he gave up his art because the world did not recognize his genius. But first he produced a remarkable body of funny, poetic, and provocative works in austere colors: demure vases with nasty, pockmarked lava glazes or slithering reptiles or handles that are elongated, angulated, or looped. Other vessels have been dented, pinched, or punched. Through Jan. 7. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—An exhibition of Alexander Calder's homemade art: jewelry, toys, tools, and furnishings he whipped up for himself, his family, and his friends. Included are necklaces and brooches made with precious metals, and rude tin roasting pans and spatulas. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

FRICK COLLECTION, 1 E. 70th St.—A display of seventeen Old Master paintings on loan from the Kimbell Art Museum, in Fort Worth, Texas, including works by Caravaggio, Rubens, Fra Angelico, and Goya. Starts Nov. 15. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays 1 to 6.)

MORGAN LIBRARY, 29 E. 36th St.—A show that should be a Gilbert and Sullivan lover's dream. It will include handwritten librettos; original-cast photographs, programs, and recorded music; and all the surviving original scores for the dynamic duo's operas. Starts Nov. 16. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—An exhibition of more than a hundred and sixty works on loan from Cambridge's Fitzwilliam Museum. The many periods and genres represented range from antiquities and coins to drawings (by Goltzius, Carracci, Rembrandt, Watteau, and Turner) and paintings (by Rubens, Hogarth, and Ford Madox Brown). Starts Nov. 15. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—Weathervanes and whirligigs, carousel animals and cigar-store Indians—these are among the hundred-plus works of folk art in an exhibit selected from the collection of the Shelburne Museum, in Vermont. Through Jan. 7. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM, 144 W. 125th St.—"Stitching Memories: African-American Story Quilts," a display of thirty quilts with narrative motifs made in the seventies and eighties by professional and folk artists. Also, Elizabeth Scott's "50 Years Quilt," made between 1925 and 1975, and an anonymous silk log-cabin quilt from the eighteen-seventies. Through Dec. 31. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

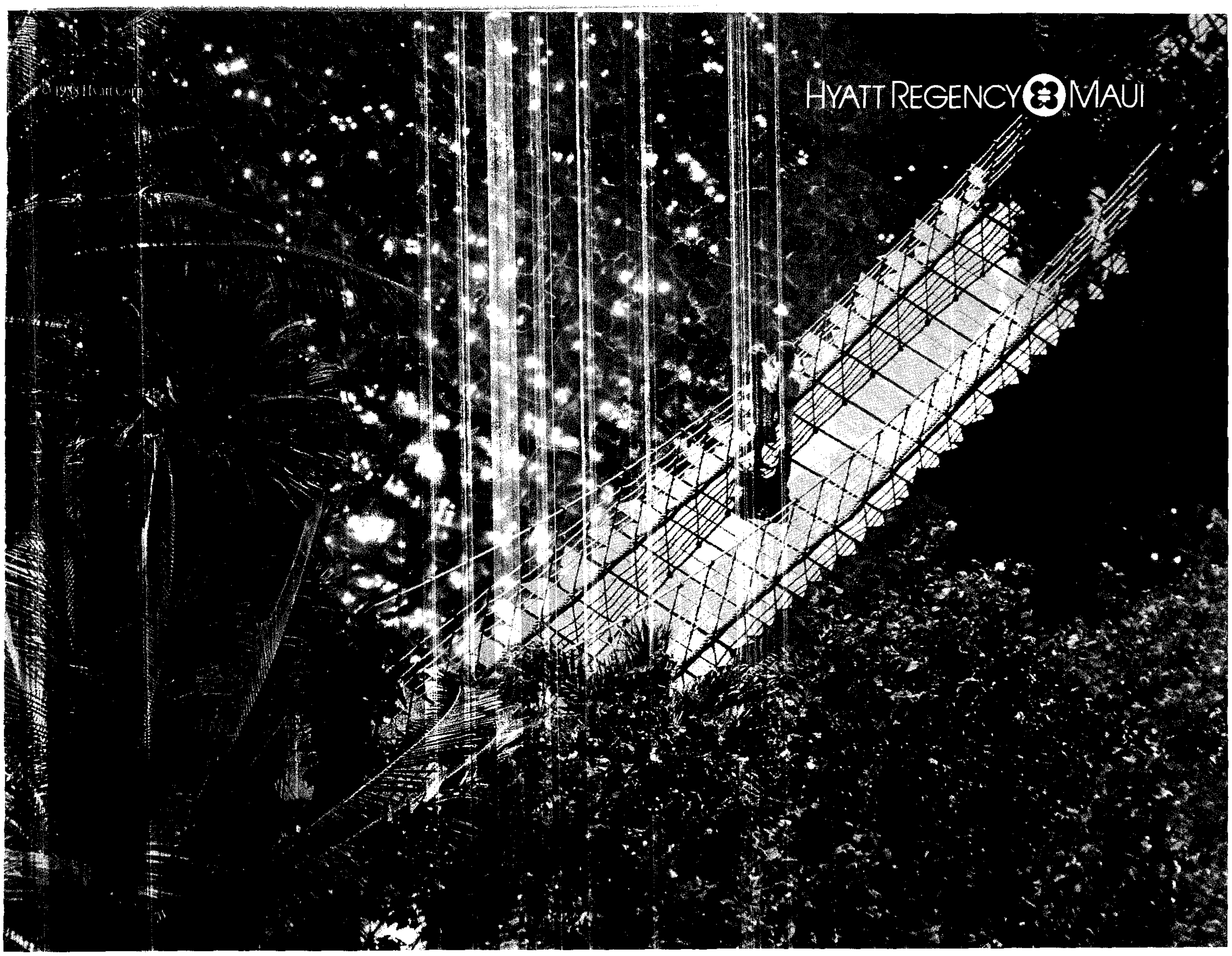
GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

GIACOMO BALLA (1871-1958)—This show displays the Italian Futurist at his swirling, mobile best with exquisite drawings, made in the teens, of pure dynamic motion, including a number of Boccioni's herculean fist, and product designs for a lampshade and a screen. Even the artist's "futur Balla" trade-

TRACKS

As a kid, we were never sure what to do with model trains—cars you could race, at least. Still, a million train sets are sold each year, half a million people belong to model-railroad clubs, and the Citicorp Center offers an annual model-train exhibition called Citibank Station. The show's third installment, set inside a thirty-two-foot replica of a Victorian New York train station, pulls in on November 24. A hundred and fifty trains, dating from as far back as the Second World War, simulate the journey from Weehawken, New Jersey, to the 1939 World's Fair, in Queens. The original Fair included Railroads on Parade, a pavilion designed to excite visitors about the future of locomotives. Citibank Station includes a replica of this display, and it's an odd combination—nostalgia for a more innocent view of the future, coupled with nostalgia for the toys of the past. Computers control sound and lighting effects, bringing the whole shebang from day to night every five minutes. There are miniature vending machines, airplanes, and tombstones—everything except Gomez Addams, of the Addams family, pushing his plunger and blowing the tracks sky-high.



Compelling proof that people are romantic by nature.

It's not surprising that what's inside a person's heart can be influenced by what's outside. Which certainly explains the remarkable attraction of the Hyatt Regency Maui.

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mark signature, which appears on a number of the works, has a superhero forcefulness. Through Dec. 16. (Horan, 35 E. 67th St. Open Mondays.)

Robert Beauchamp—Dark, mythic paintings from the sixties that have huge birds in thick, sculptural paint, as well as horses, naked women, and balloons of paint. Through Nov. 22. (Vanderwoude Tananbaum, 24 E. 81st St.) . . . ¶ In paintings from the past ten years the artist's palette lightens up and the images become sprightlier, but the depictions suffer from an engulfing decorativeness. Through Nov. 25. (M-13, at 72 Greene St.)

James Brooks—Brooks is one of the least known of the original Abstract Expressionists and is credited with making the first stain painting. Of these paintings from the early fifties, the small ones look simply like fragments, but the large ones are quite buoyant and owe their airiness to a sensitive and direct use of color. Through Nov. 18. (Berry-Hill, 11 E. 70th St. Open Mondays.)

Nancy Fried—Horrifying small clay sculptures of mastectomied torsos and punctured tongues—either cheap sensationalism or gut-wrenching grief. Through Nov. 25. (Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.)

David Levine—These small oil paintings of very sombre women and watercolors of various subjects are deft and sensitive new works by a veteran realist. Through Nov. 29. (Forum, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Robert Rauschenberg—In his characteristic way—this time in paint on copper, aluminum, and brass—the artist celebrates the overstimulation of contemporary life with a very painterly, uncontrollable delight. Given such an endeavor, it's uncommon to see someone having so good a time. Through Nov. 30. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. . . . ¶ Hamilton, 19 E. 71st St., is showing four assemblages made in the mid-eighties.)

Art Schade—An exhibition of nonrepresentational cast-metal sculptures that adequately evoke such ephemera as a pile of tumbleweeds. Through Nov. 25. (Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St.)

Andy Warhol (1930-87)—One of the unfortunate deficiencies of the Museum of Modern Art's Warhol retrospective last winter was the absence of many works from the seventies, such as the hundred-and-two-panel painting entitled "The Shadow." Included in this show are four large horizontal "Shadow" canvases never before exhibited—some of Warhol's most mystifying works. They are purely abstract, although they conjure up the notion of landscape, and they seem to portray pictorial blindness in a poignant and unsettling way not ordinarily associated with the artist. Some medium-sized "Shadow" canvases on display were done in diamond dust and have a ghostly conceptual preciousness. Through Dec. 2. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Venetian Glass from 1919 to 1990—A nice show of mostly Venini-fabricated glass vases and figurines by an assortment of designers and artists. The American Dale Chihuly's are the wildest by far. Through Dec. 2. (Karasik, 1094 Madison Ave., at 82nd St.)

Short List—**henri matisse,** La Boetie, 9 E. 82nd St. (through Dec. 16); **theodoros stamos,** Kouros, 23 E. 73rd St. (through Dec. 2).

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Magdalena Abakanowicz—Rows of large, brown, headless, and armless figures that look predictable—a dreary Eastern European march of hardened-burlap soldiers. Two huge tree trunks wrapped in iron bandages and lying on cold iron boxes, however, are arresting, and a group of deep-snouted bronze animal heads on standing stakes are classical, elegant, and a bit haunting. Through Nov. 25. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Joseph Cornell (1903-72)—These box constructions and framed collages of "Dovecotes, Hotels, and Other White Spaces" are some of Cornell's sparest and least loved. But the highly dramatic installation, against walls covered in rusticated bluish-gray rice paper, makes it so easy to recognize the great beauty of Cornell's cracked surfaces and the delicacy of his compositions that it's possible to imagine that some of these works will never look any better. Through Nov. 25. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

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19	20	21	22			

William Gropper (1897-1977)—This painter had a flair for cartoonish social realism, but somehow these figurative oils of crotchety lawyers, befuddled chess players, and knobby senators fail to provide either incisive commentary or good illustration, and owe far too much of their visual character to Chagall. Through Nov. 21. (Deutsch, 29 W. 57th St.)

Joan Mitchell—A beautiful, space-encompassing show of recent abstract paintings by an artist who first triumphed in the late fifties and is triumphant again. Mitchell lives in Vétheuil, France—Monet country—and her fresh tossed salads of garden color reflect her actual as well as historic surroundings. These paintings have sentiment in them, but also some vinegar. Through Nov. 25. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Kathy Muehlemann—Modest black-and-white paintings of spots and pale flashes of light. Through Nov. 25. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Nam June Paik—An eye-opening, rambunctious exhibition of recent works by the renowned techno-wiz. It includes a number of mixed-media homages to Joseph Beuys; closed-circuit video monitors airing the multiple image of a swinging pendulum; a video monitor in a wood birdcage; computer-generated paintings on canvas, one with attached tribal masks; teeny TVs buried in stretched canvases; stagy Oriental kitsch; and more. Through Nov. 25. (Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Charles Pollock (1902-88)—These modest figure-ground abstract paintings from 1963 by Jackson's older brother have a calligraphic sensitivity, with reminders of Newman's zips, Motherwell's blackness, and Still's isolation. Their humility is not what one usually associates with the Pollock name, and, while quite accomplished, the paintings tend to be too understated. Through Dec. 9. (McCoy, 41 E. 57th St.)

Salvatore Scarpitta—Three of five very homespun videotapes the artist has made of his racing cars. Through Nov. 30. (Baron-Boisanté, 50 W. 57th St.)

William Turnbull—This mature British sculptor makes bronzes of huge standing flint stones and of small pre-classical figures (one recalls the Venus of Willendorf) that are technically virtuosic but that leave the mind little room to wander. Through Nov. 22. (Herstand, 24 W. 57th St.)

Group Shows—At the **associated american artists,** 20 W. 57th St.: Many of the early-twentieth-century American masters did some of their finest work in etching, and this fifty-fifth-anniversary gallery exhibition includes some of their rare and important prints, most notably by Benton, Bellows, and Hopper. There's also a wonderful 1931 Cubist-Surrealist Gorky of the artist and his model, a fine 1945 Surrealist etching by June Wayne, and a delicate pictographic aquatint by Adolph Gottlieb, from 1944. The prints by European masters are less impressive. Through Dec. 2. . . . **krugier,** 41 E. 57th St.: This sculpture show makes no incisive point, but it does include some magnificent modern works, including a startling larger-than-life clenched hand by Rodin, a plaster head of a sleeping child by Brancusi, a small Brancusi abstract fish, and a stylish Cubist head in iron by Julio González. Through Dec. 2.

Short List—**jake berthot,** McKee, 41 E. 57th St. (through Dec. 2); **jack bush,** Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Nov. 28); **eduardo chillida,** Janis, 110 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Dec. 30); **tony cragg,** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Dec. 1); **gino de dominicis,** Rayburn, 41 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 10); **nicola de maria,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 25); **minnie evans,** Ross, 50 W. 57th St. (through Dec. 6); **nancy hagin,** Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 29); **john hartell,** Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Nov. 25); **ellsworth kelly** and **jack barth,** Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St. (through Dec. 9); **walt kuhn,** Midtown, 11 E. 57th St. (through Dec. 30); **alexander liberman** (through Dec. 2) and **morris louis** (through Nov. 25), Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.; **john marin,** Kennedy, 40 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 25); **grandma moses,** Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. (through Jan. 13).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Doug Anderson—Large, bland collage paintings of patterns of lacy flowers that make one think of a turn-of-the-century bordello. They are supposed to derive their meaning from their use within our product-addicted art system, but even as critiques they are low in provocation, attractiveness, and diversion, while as acts of collusion they are neither gutsy nor entertaining. Through Dec. 2. (Stux, 155 Spring St.)

Howard Ben Tré—Huge, senseless minimal glass sculptures that attempt but fail to achieve elegance. Through Nov. 25. (Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)

David Cabrera—The artist uses deliberately dumb, light-hearted, ahistorical, and very arty methods to portray and perhaps neutralize horrors; large pink paintings about the massacre of Aztecs, for example, and childlike framed drawings featuring the words "people with AIDS." Through Nov. 22. (303 Gallery, 127 Spring St.) . . . ¶ In a collaborative exhibition with Fariba Hajamadi, Cabrera offers a wonderfully silly and boyish spin on conceptual art by tying together sticks to spell out "Had to Write It Had to Get It off My Chest." Through Nov. 18. (Watson, 241 Lafayette St.)

Sandro Chia—New figurative drawings in ephemeral hothouse colors and with existential or mythological themes. A few include outré collage elements and faux decorative borders that remind you at every turn of Picasso, Schnabel, and the concept of horror vacui. Titles such as "Void Is Insolent" and "I Wish to Be Everything" are redundant; everything here seems overindicated. Through Nov. 18. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

Luciano Fabro—A major Italian Arte Povera artist making his belated début here. He pays homage to New York with a cheery installation work in which he places himself in a European-American continuum. The piece, entitled "Two Nudes Descending a Staircase Dancing the Boogie-Woogie," takes its image from Duchamp and its colors from Mondrian, and includes two highly polished marble slabs, which are carved to look relaxed, and which lie on a fallen, no longer hierarchical staircase. This highly aestheticized piece, perhaps in keeping with the artist's view of New York, is metallic and playfully frivolous. Through Dec. 15. (SteinGladstone, a new gallery located at 99 Wooster St.)

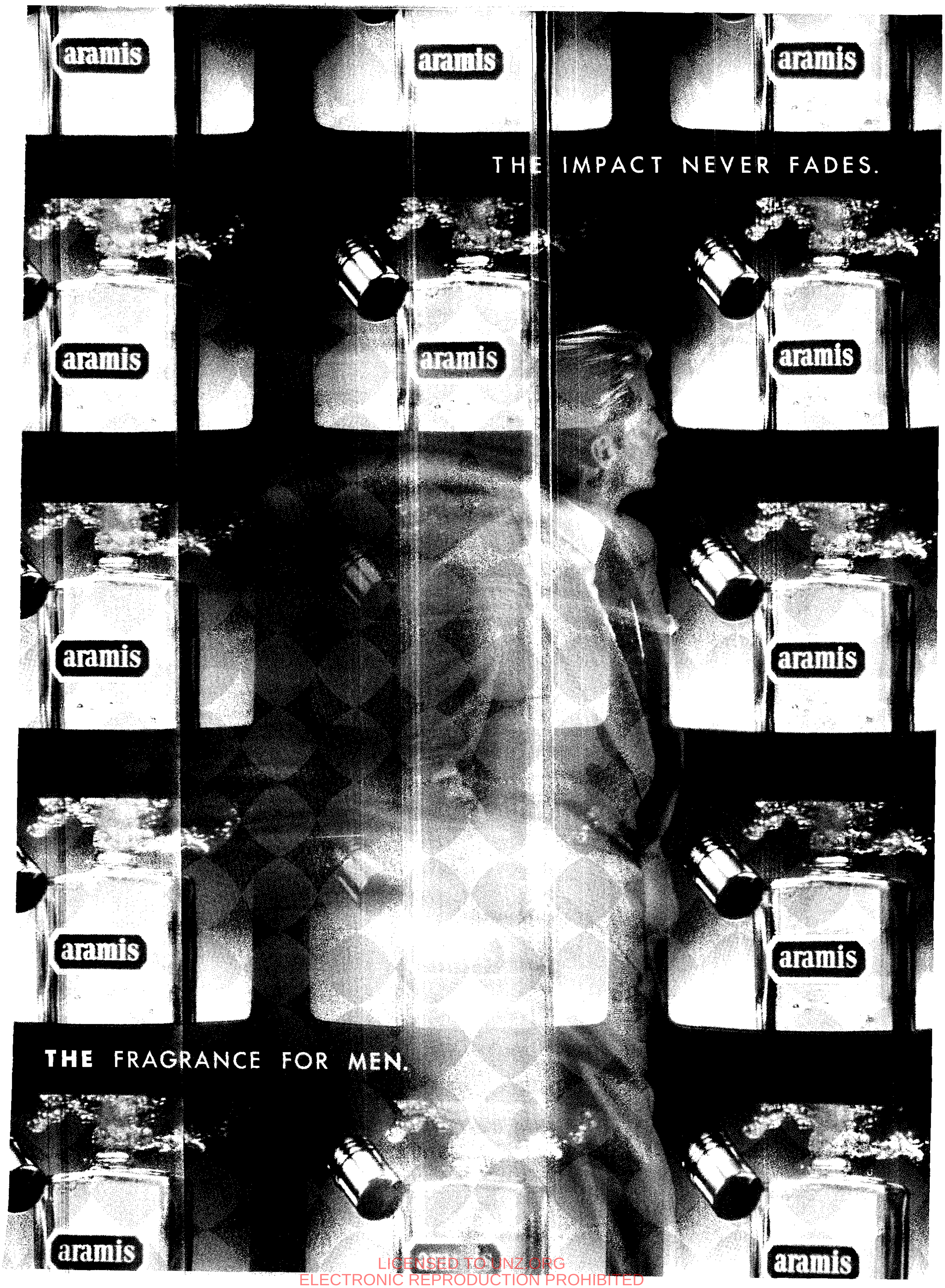
Rafael Ferrer—Ferrer has dropped his electric palette and stopped depicting nude women in exploitative ways, in favor of more modest and thoughtful narrative paintings of the lovely, tree-filtered light of the Dominican Republic. Through Nov. 29. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Dan Flavin—Customarily, Flavin's neon sculptures are monumental and static, but in this new installation—of fluorescent fixtures with colored and uncolored tubes—they are also very aggressive. The fixtures hang in midair at sharp angles from two of the gallery's three skylights, like brilliant-colored lightning bolts. The work fits smartly within the ongoing nature-culture dialogue, and projects an urgent political tone. Through Nov. 30. (65 Thompson Street Gallery.)

Jan Hashey—Abstract paintings incorporating childish portrayals of pets by an artist who has great formal skills but little to say. Through Nov. 25. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

Mary Lucier—This is one of the most enchanting and accessible works produced in video. Its seven synchronized monitors display a well-orchestrated array of images inspired by American landscape, genre, and still-life painting. Just when you find yourself entranced by images of the forest, ice floes, the hunt, and a Spartan bedroom, the camera gently pulls back to reveal a picture frame around the image—a clear reminder of its own technology. Through Nov. 25. (Greenberg Wilson, 560 Broadway.)

Chris Macdonald—Big, raw, freestand-


aramis
THE IMPACT NEVER FADES.
THE FRAGRANCE FOR MEN.

ing wood sculptures that strongly suggest children's toys and zoo animals. The artist has been working this turf for a while now, and these pieces, while as likable as earlier ones, seem literal, limited, and too cute. Through Dec. 2. (Beitzel, 113 Greene St.)

Sylvia Plimack Mangold—Beautiful new paintings of trees. Some are leafy and feathery, others are bare except for networks of tendrils, but all have such a high degree of abstraction to them that the artist's signature faux masking tape, which appears on a number of the edges and refers to the painting process, seems less essential than it did in the past. Still, the marriage of representation and abstraction is achieved in a subtle and thoughtful way. Through Nov. 29. (Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

Nachume Miller—Turbulent paintings of mostly dark, dramatically lit cavernous spaces in a Futurist-Expressionist style. Through Dec. 2. (Donahue, 560 Broadway.)

Curtis Mitchell—There's an intriguing sense of theatre in this installation of unsettling sculptures—a bustier filled with lard, a braided rug with tufts of long, stringy hair, eruptive-looking walls—but the artist's fastidious use of his craft somewhat undermines his sense of the surreal. The works on view are also uncomfortably reminiscent of Robert Gober's. Through Nov. 18. (Lang & O'Hara, 568 Broadway.)

Dieter Roth—Works in several mediums, including chocolate, from the past three decades by a maverick German artist who's a bit of a prankster and a funkster. Krazy Kat urbanism is most often his theme. Through Nov. 21. (Nolan, 560 Broadway.)

Maria Scotti—These modest and attractive mixed-media paintings inspired by Giotto and his circle take the spatial simplicity of the early Renaissance and update it with a controlled brush and imagery. Through Nov. 25. (Walls, 137 Greene St.)

Jackie Winsor / Julian Lethbridge—New work by this cube-ist includes inset wall pieces and pyramidal floor sculptures—squared, made of cement, and with recesses of surprise pigment. This show is physically softer and more fanciful in tone than Winsor's previous ones. Here and there you may even think of pink Indian fairy tales. / Lethbridge's oil-on-linen, faux-crocodile abstractions look good, and nuances of texture and intensity are more evident than before. This work operates at a very low frequency but has laconic wit and a certain intellectual élan. Through Nov. 30. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

"From Mondrian to Minimalism"—Mondrian's spiritual devotion to the horizontal and vertical gave rise to a whole generation of American Constructivists, and even though this show includes no Mondrian it traces the path from the legacy left by that master of pictorial purity on to minimalism. The exhibition fails to deliver the historical overview that its title suggests, but it does include a fine little Burgoyne Diller drawing of 1948, a relational composition on canvas by Fritz Glarner of 1951, and some proto-minimalist paintings by Leon Polk Smith from the early fifties. Through Nov. 21. (Pearl, 420 West Broadway.)

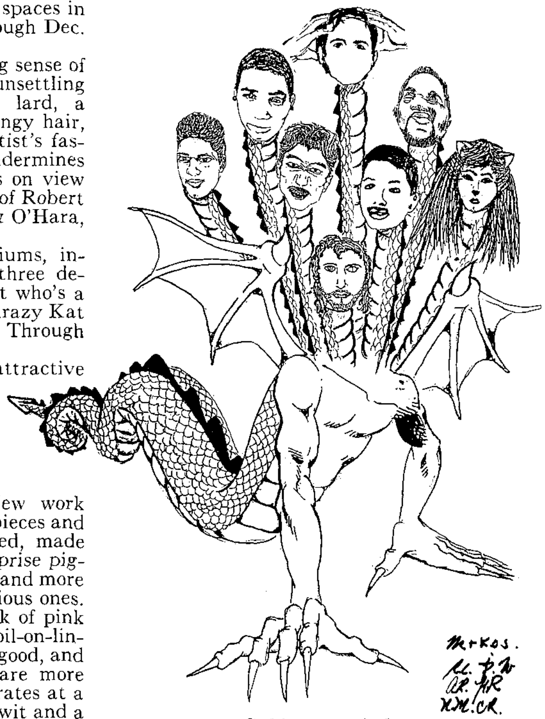
Short List—**candida alvarez,** Kelly, 591 Broadway (through Dec. 2); **jean-michel basquiat,** Baghoomian, 555 Broadway (through Nov. 25); **gary bukovnik,** Staempfli, 415 West Broadway (through Dec. 9); **edgar buonagurio,** Steinbaum, 132 Greene St. (through Dec. 2); **daniel buren** and **franz erhard walther,** Weber, 142 Greene St. (through Nov. 25); **christian eckart,** Audiello, 142 Greene St. (through Dec. 9); **joel fisher,** Brown, 560 Broadway (through Dec. 2); **richard hamilton,** Kasmin, 580 Broadway (through Nov. 25); **carol hepper,** Esman, 70 Greene St. (through Nov. 18); **catherine murphy,** Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway (through Dec. 22); **pino pascali,** Ala, 560 Broadway (through Dec. 9); **kay rosen** and **jim isermann,** Feature, 484 Broome St. (through Dec. 2).

OTHER GALLERIES

Roz Chast—Cartoons. Pen and ink and wash; also watercolors. The Apprehension Trail from "Anxiety State Park" might be new to readers of this magazine, but most other drawings on view by our chronicler of the freakishly normal and the routinely queer will be familiar. Through Dec. 3. (The Illustration Gallery, 330 E. 11th St. Opens at 1 Tuesdays through Sundays.)

Lydia Dona—Recent paintings. This artist's very proficient, somewhat lacklustre paintings suggest the combined influences of fifties Scandinavian design and recent intellectual conceits involving the actual and metaphoric connotations of computer circuitry. The beiges, browns, and flesh tones get tedious fast. The green painting here is better. Through Nov. 25. (Cugliani, 508 Greenwich St., at Spring St.)

Raymond Hains / André Cadere (1934-78)—An exceedingly pretentious exhibition of works by a French *nouveau réaliste.* / Striped batons that were originally carried as symbols of protest (when the artist crashed prestigious art events) are, in this exhibit, arranged as wall and floor pieces. Through Dec. 10. (P.S. 1, 46-01 21st St., Long Island City. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)



Self-portrait by Tim Rollins + K.O.S.

Zvi Hecker—Drawings, models, and photographs of a terraced apartment complex based upon a spiral and of a civic center shaped like a sunflower, by an Israeli architect known for his love of earthy materials and his fierce commitment to his profession. Through Nov. 18. (Storefront for Art & Architecture, 97 Kenmare St., at Lafayette St. Opens at noon.)

Tim Rollins + K.O.S.—A very smart exhibition of paintings and numerous related drawings by a former New York City public-school teacher and his high-school collaborators—kids from the South Bronx whom the system had deemed ineducable. The work is inseparable from its provenance, which is truly inspirational, and the images—fanciful, fantasy golden horns—are in essence self-portraits that the students created under the influence of a broad range of cultural references, from Uccello to Ninja weapons. The works' literary source is the last chapter of Kafka's unfinished novel "Amerika," upon whose pages they are painted. The show is a glorious sight—loud, brassy, and boisterous. Through June 17. (Dia Art Foundation, 548 W. 22nd St. Opens at noon Thursdays through Sundays.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

While waiting to be called for our turn with the dental hygienist the other day, and already feeling guilty because we'd fallen off the wagon with our flossing, we leafed through some magazines and came across a few advertisements that made us feel even more like a misfit. All of the ads assumed that the reader was thinking about the holiday season. Christmas? We're still finding it hard to believe that the summer is over, and yet the order-now-before-it's-too-late pressure is already on. Every year, we ignore these imperatives, and on Christmas Eve we find ourself standing in long lines, frantic and harried. One year, we turned to the person behind us for a little neighborly comfort and he turned out to be a flasher. He opened his raincoat and exposed himself right there in the department-store gift-wrap line.

We'll never be late again, or at a loss for what to give, because that day at the dentist, seconds before we were summoned, we found an ad for the perfect gift: a photo statue. All you need is a color negative of a photograph, and from that a huge enlargement can be made and mounted. We first saw these photo statues on the street, and the first people we saw blown up were the Reagans; for a price, passersby could have their photographs taken with them. Since then, we've seen all sorts of photo statues, including one at a friend's house of a cat that seemed so real to another friend's dog that she wouldn't stop barking at it till we put the cat in the drawer. In New York City, what more could you ask for than pets that don't have to be walked, or even companions that don't hog the bathroom, all of whom are always there when you come home?

Berenice Abbott—Although the photographs on view span five decades, for the most part they're not nostalgic. The largest section of the exhibition covers Abbott's New York pictures. A couple of these views—of the understructures of the R.K.O. Building and the former RCA Building—made us realize how rarely pictures focus on the bottom end of a skyscraper. In these asbestos-blowup days, that's where the action is. Through Jan. 6. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. Open daily, except Sundays, from 10 to 6.)

New Photography at MOMA—Three eccentric photographers who work in color. Thomas Florschuetz shows hyperreal blowups of details of his hands, his face, and a nail; one of Vincent Borrelli's subjects is the interior of a 1956 Ford whose décor is part disco and part Bible; and Mike Mandel, the most original of the three, fits his subjects with tiny colored bicycle lights that function as strobes—the resulting trails of light enliven such mundane actions as "Emptying the Fridge" or "Having a Talk." Through Jan. 9. (Museum of Modern Art.)

Magnum Photographers—About two hundred prints by the founders of the Magnum coöperative—Robert Capa, Henri Cartier-Bresson, David Seymour (Chim), and George Rodger. Through Jan. 7. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.) . . . ¶ "In Our Time," another Magnum-based show, includes more than three hundred works taken around the world by sixty past and present members. Through Feb. 4. (International Center of Photography, Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. Daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**lewis w. hine,** Photofind, 138 Spring St. (through Nov. 25); **helen levitt,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (through Dec. 2); **frank majore,** Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through Nov. 25); **roger mayne,** Prakapas, 19 E. 71st St. (opens at noon, through Dec. 9); **joel sternfeld,** Pace-MacGill, 11 E. 57th St. (through Nov. 25).

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AIG Issues Forum

Why it's vital to all Ame environmental trust f

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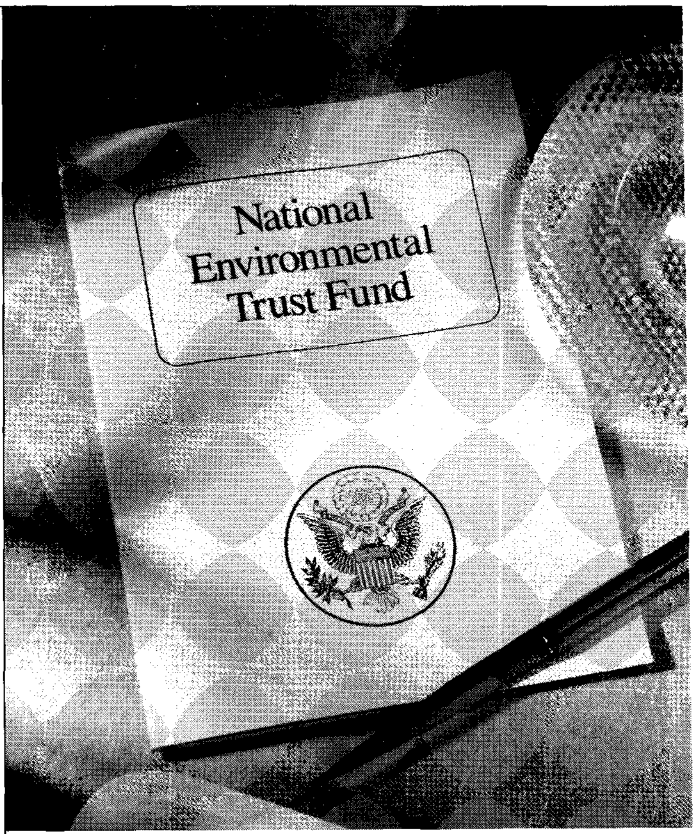
Despite the fact that at many sites it's impossible to tell who caused what and when, as much as 60% of cleanup funds go toward legal expenses in costly efforts to fix the blame instead of the problem.

WHY SHOULD ONE PARTY BEAR THE SOLE BURDEN FOR WHAT AMOUNTS TO A BROAD PUBLIC PROBLEM?

Businesses and public agencies are being held liable today for environmental damage that was not considered illegal or intentional 25, 30 or 40 years ago.

The cost to clean up just one existing toxic waste site can run as high as several billion dollars. If individual companies are found responsible, the resulting expense could put them at a serious competitive disadvantage.

Why? Because current law requires them to pay for cleaning up the residue of economic progress–progress from which we've all benefitted.



Legislation is needed to create a National Environmental Trust Fund.

THERE'S MORE ACTION IN THE COURTROOM THAN AT THE CLEAN UP SITES.

Imagine holding a construction company liable for rebuilding an old office building whenever a new building code is issued. This form of retroactive liability is doing as much harm to our efforts to deal with toxic waste as toxic waste has done to the environment.

At AIG, we think it's high time to find a

cans to create a national d...and to do so now.

better approach to the problem of cleaning up old hazardous waste sites. One that spreads the cost more broadly–and more equitably.

HERE'S AN IDEA THAT MAY SOUND SELF-SERVING UNTIL YOU SEE HOW MUCH SENSE IT MAKES.

We propose creating a National Environmental Trust Fund similar to the National Highway Trust Fund.

Its resources would be dedicated solely to cleaning up those hazardous waste sites where no intentional environmental harm was done by firms which under today's laws–applied retroactively–are forced to pay astronomical cleanup costs.

The fund could be financed by adding a separate fee to commercial/industrial insurance premiums now paid in the U.S.

Even a modest assessment–say, 2% of premiums–would provide about $40 billion over the next decade, more than enough to deal with the top 1,200 highest priority waste sites.

Funds would be collected by insurance companies and remitted to a responsible agency, with an advisory board of private citizens and public officials charged with administering the program.

Just think.

A new way to finance Superfund's mission without the need for new taxes, a new government agency or unproductive legal hassles.

WHY IS AIG RUNNING ADS LIKE THIS?

AIG (American International Group) is the largest underwriter of commercial and industrial insurance in America, and the leading U.S.-based international insurer.

The nature of our business means we deal every day with issues affecting the future of the world economy.

We've started this dialogue to encourage people like you to help shape the future.

Perhaps you'll want to keep the ball rolling by discussing this with your public representative, environmental or trade group. We hope you will.

Shouldn't we stop trying to fix the blame and start trying to fix the problem?

If you have thoughts of your own to share, write M.R. Greenberg, Chairman, AIG, 70 Pine Street, New York, NY 10270.

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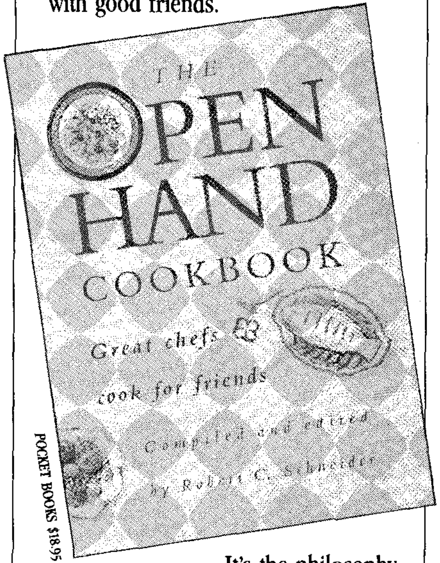
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MUSIC

Richard Strauss had an orderly compositional mind, and while at work on a major piece he was also usually thinking several projects ahead. After the success of his gory "Salome," he declared that he wanted to write "a Mozart opera" next. "Elektra"—the first of the composer's six operatic collaborations with the librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal—intervened, but after that came "Der Rosenkavalier," which is as close to the world of Mozart as any composer has come.

The pair's next opera was "Ariadne auf Naxos," which cost them years of work (it proved impractical in its first form and had to be revised). But just two months after "Rosenkavalier" 's première Hofmannsthal and Strauss were thinking about another "Mozart" opera. "It is a magic fairy tale with two men confronting two women . . . a many-colored spectacle with palace and hut, priests, boats, torches, tunnels through the rock, choruses, children," wrote Hofmannsthal to the composer in March, 1911. It would, the librettist continued, "stand in the same relation to 'Die Zauberflöte' as 'Rosenkavalier' does to 'Figaro.' "

The result, eight years later, was "Die Frau ohne Schatten," a work whose symbolism has been as difficult and obscure as its musical beauty has been apparent. The Metropolitan is currently reviving it for the first time since 1981, with a cast of some promise and a conductor (Christof Perick) who has been generally admired in German opera over the last decade.

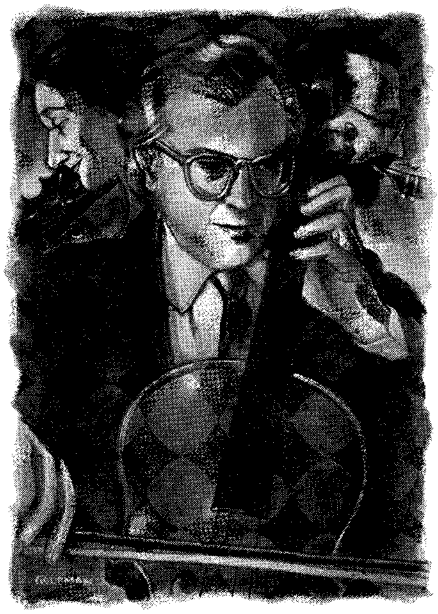
The public could not, Hofmannsthal thought, confront the piece unprepared. "We absolutely must have an introduction . . . in order to clear the way for proper understanding of the interplay of motives and symbols; I always had this quite definitely in mind," he wrote in 1915. But the introduction was never written. Operagoers could do worse than to consult, instead, the creators' correspondence (published in English by Cambridge). The opera has also recently received its first uncut recording, on Angel/EMI compact disks.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; for the Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St., 854-7799; and for the Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St., 570-3949. Other box-office numbers are included in the listings.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**DIE FRAU OHNE SCHATTEN,** with Mechthild Gessendorf, Marilyn Zschau, Robert Schunk, and Bernd Weikl; conducted by Christof Perick. (Nov. 13 at 7:30 and Nov. 18 at 12:30.) . . . With Mechthild Gessendorf, Marilyn Zschau, Gary Lakes, and Bernd Weikl; Christof Perick. (Nov. 21 at 7:30.) . . . **IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA,** with Kathleen Battle, Gino Quilico, Stanford Olsen, Enzo Dara, and Bonaldo Giaiotti; Julius Rudel. (Nov. 14 and Nov. 17 at 8.) . . . **RIGOLETTO,** *with June Anderson, Luciano Pavarotti,* and Leo Nucci; Marcello Panni. (Nov. 15 and Nov. 18 at 8.) . . . With Hei-Kyung Hong, Luciano Pavarotti, and Leo Nucci; Marcello Panni. (Nov. 22 at 8.) . . . **LA TRAVIATA,** with Edita Gruberova, Neil Shicoff, and Brian Schexnayder; Michelangelo Veltri. (Nov. 16 at 8.) . . . **LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN,** with Ruth Welting, Judith Blegen, Judith Forst, Luis Lima, and José van Dam; Sylvain Cambreling. (Nov. 20 at 8.)

Opera Ensemble of New York—Paul C. Echols conducting Monteverdi's "Return of Ulysses" (in English). (Lillie Blake School Theatre, 45 E. 81st St. Nov. 15 and Nov. 17 at 8, Nov. 19 at 7, and Nov. 22 at 8. For information about tickets, call 288-1485.)


Fred Sherry and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

Amato Opera Company—Presenting "Il Trovatore." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Nov. 17-18 at 7:30.)

Juilliard Opera Center—Andreas Delfs conducting "Così Fan Tutte." (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Nov. 17 at 8, Nov. 19 at 3, and Nov. 21 at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-7515.)

Collegiate Chorale—Robert Bass conducting the New York première of Richard Strauss's one-act opera "Friedenstag," in a concert version. With Alessandra Marc, soprano; Roger Roloff, baritone; Richard Cassilly and George Shirley, tenors; the New York City Gay Men's Chorus; and others. (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 19 at 7:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Zubin Mehta conducting. Nov. 14 at 7:30: Works by Schubert and Gustav Holst. With the New York Choral Artists, directed by Joseph Flummerfelt. . . . ¶ Nov. 16-17 and Nov. 21 at 8: A Mussorgsky-Shostakovich-Dvořák program. With Natalia Gutman, cello. . . . ¶ Nov. 18 at 2: Three movements from Holst's "The Planets."

Juilliard Orchestra—James De Preist conducting a program of works by Persichetti, Mozart, and Strauss. (Avery Fisher Hall. Nov. 15 at 8.)

Columbia University Orchestra—George Rothman conducting works by Sibelius, Ravel, and Tchaikovsky. (Miller Theatre. Nov. 17 at 8.)

Manhattan Symphony—Ransom Wilson conducting an all-Duruflé program. With the Ascension Choir. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Nov. 17 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Gerard Schwarz conducting Hindemith's "Nobilissima Visione." With Vladimir Feltsman, piano. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Nov. 18 at 8 and Nov. 19 at 3.)

Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century—Frans Brüggen conducting an all-Mozart program. (Avery Fisher Hall. Nov. 19 at 3.)

Philharmonia Virtuosi—Richard Kapp conducting five works by French composers. With Anton Nel, piano. (Town Hall, 125 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Nov. 21 at 8.)

Goodman Chamber Choir—In a program of seventeenth-century sacred and secular music. (Church of St. Mary the Virigin, 145 W. 46th St. Nov. 19 at 3. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the performance.)

Florilegium Chamber Choir and Orchestra—JoAnn Rice directing works by Bach, Heinrich Schütz, and Hugo Distler. (German Church, 315 W. 22nd St., near Eighth Ave. Nov. 19 at 3. For information about tickets, call 627-9141.)

Music Today—Gerard Schwarz conducting the ensemble in the première of a work by Larry Bell, along with works by Ernst Krenek and Barbara Kolb. With Mr. Bell, piano. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 22 at 8.)

RECITALS

Shura Cherkassky—Piano. (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 14 at 8.)

Speculum Musicae—Performing chamber works by Toru Takemitsu. (Miller Theatre. Nov. 14 at 8.)

Eugenia Zukerman and Anthony Newman—Flute and harpsichord. (Celeste Bartos Forum, New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. Nov. 15 at 6. For information about tickets, call 930-0855.)

Downtown Ensemble—Performing works by Anthony Coleman, Daniel Goode, Mary Jane Leach, and William Hellermann. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 15 at 2.)

New York Woodwind Quintet—With Gilbert Kalish, piano. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 15 at 8.)

Chamber Sound—Playing works by Gershwin. (Webster Branch, New York Public Library, 1465 York Ave., at 78th St. Nov. 16 at 7. No tickets neccesary.)

Charles Libove and Nina Lugovoy—Violin and piano. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 16 at 8.)

Music from Marlboro—A program of chamber music, with Scott St. John, violin; Philipp Naegele, viola; Todd Palmer, clarinet; Michelle Reed, horn; and others. With Rudolf Serkin, musical director. (Metropolitan Museum. Nov. 16 at 8.)

"Music New to New York"—The Washington Square Contemporary Music Society presenting five premières. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Nov. 16 at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—In the New York première of a string sextet by Charles Wuorinen, among other works. Artists of the society include Ani and Ida Kavafian, violin; and Leslie Parnas and Fred Sherry, cello. (Alice Tully Hall. Nov. 17 at 8, Nov. 18 at 2, and Nov. 19 at 5.)

John O'Conor—Playing a program of Beethoven piano sonatas. (Metropolitan Museum. Nov. 17 at 8.)

New World String Quartet—In a concert of compositions by Beethoven, Ligeti, and Brahms. With Gilbert Kalish, piano. (Weill Recital Hall. Nov. 17 at 8.)

"Opposites Attract"—A program of music composed and performed by guitarist Paul Dresher and woodwind player Ned Rothenberg. Also with Samm Bennett, Mark Helias, and others. (Guggenheim Museum Auditorium, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. 360-3558. Nov. 17 at 8.)

Chilingirian String Quartet—The London-based group in a program of works by Beethoven, Schumann, and Michael Tippett. (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. Nov. 18 at 8. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

Guarneri Quartet—Performing works by Schubert, Hindemith, and Debussy. (Metropolitan Museum. Nov. 18 at 8.)

Beethoven String Quartets—An afternoon of Beethoven, with the Penderecki String Quartet, the Manhattan String Quartet, and the Chilingirian String Quartet. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 19 at 3.)

Benita Valente—Soprano. With Cynthia Raim, piano. (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 19 at 3.)

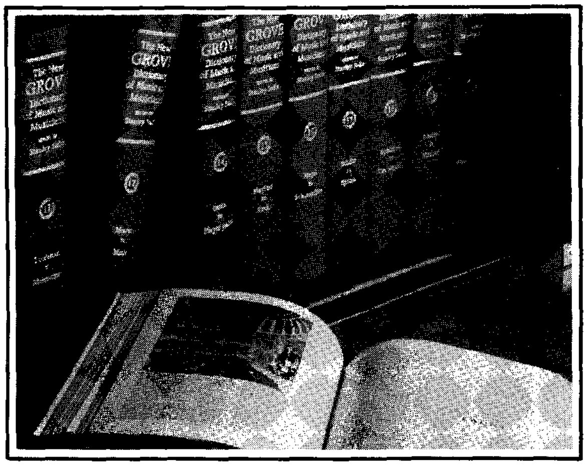
"Revolutionary Études"—A lecture-slide show-concert about nineteenth-century France. With Ophra Yerushalmi, piano; Stella Richmond, soprano; and Benjamin Hudson, violin. (Miller Theatre. Nov. 19 at 3.)

Benjamin Hudson and Gerald Ranck—Baroque violin and harpsichord. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. Nov. 19 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

Music Before 1800—Presenting Hesperion XX, a chamber ensemble, in a program of music from seventeenth-century Spain. (Corpus Christi Church, W. 121st St., just east of Broadway. Nov. 19 at 4. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

New York Festival of Song—Presenting a program of American songs. With Karen Holvik,

"It is not enough that the artist should be well prepared for the public. The public must be well prepared for what it is going to hear." —HECTOR BERLIOZ



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MUSIC–Cont'd

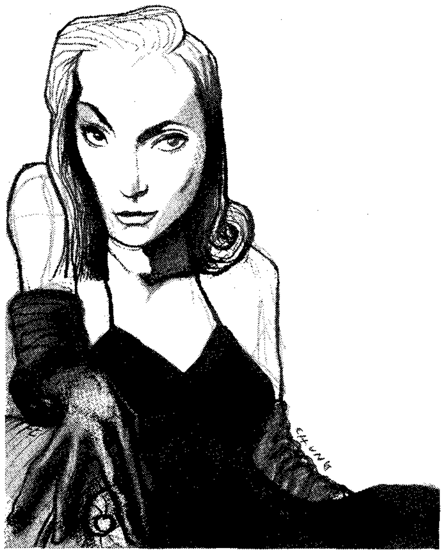
soprano; William Sharp, baritone; and Steven Blier, piano. (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. Nov. 19 at 5. For information about tickets, call 242-4770.)

Chamber Music Plus—Performing, among other works, the New York première of a piece for narrator, cello, and piano by composer Robert Starer and novelist Gail Godwin. With Sanda Schuldmann, piano, and others. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 19 at 7.)

Emanuel Vardi—Viola, with Norman Carey, piano. (Hubbard Hall, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Nov. 19 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Aurora—An early-music ensemble. With Mark Bleeke, tenor. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. Nov. 20 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Chamber Music—With Joshua Bell, violin; Matt Haimovitz, cello; Claude Frank, piano; and Cynthia Phelps, viola. (Metropolitan Museum. Nov. 20 at 8.)



Ute Lemper

Ursula Oppens—Piano. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Nov. 20 at 8.)

Apple Hill Chamber Players—In a program of works by Beethoven, Schubert, and Jon Deak. (Miller Theatre. Nov. 21 at 8.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK
PERSONAL APPEARANCES

New Kids on the Block—The brainchild—well, maybe just the child—of songwriter-producer Maurice Starr (formerly the mastermind behind New Edition), who bastardizes rap, rock, and pop in search of hits for his charges. The method has worked. New Kids have had five top-ten hits, and their latest album, "Hangin' Tough," has sold more than six million copies. Radio request lines haven't lit up like this since the days of Beatlemania, but, like the members of Menudo, these boys will probably have a short shelf life. (Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. Nov. 13 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Madison Square Garden. 563-8300. Nov. 23 at 8.)

The Ordinaires—The cover of this band's new album, "One," is a smiling face that is a computer-composite image of all nine members, and their sound is a similar ultra-postmodern layering of influences. Basic four-piece rock-band instrumentation is joined with two violins, a cello, and two saxophones in wall-of-sound compositions that sound like a three-way car crash of heavy-metal, jazz, and klezmer bands. Their version of Led Zeppelin's "Kashmir" is both hilarious and moving. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100. Nov. 18 at 8.)

Mercedes Sosa—An Argentine singer in the *nueva canción* tradition of folk and protest songs. Ms. Sosa, who can command the attention of even a stadium audience with her beautiful contralto, travels North all too infrequently for her fans here. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424. Nov. 18 at 8.)

Ute Lemper—*Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911. Nov.* 15 at 8.

Rap Mania II—With K.R.S.-One & Boogie Down Productions, Redhead Kingpin & the F.B.I., and E.P.M.D. (Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 864-0372. Nov. 17 at 7:30.)

Tuck & Patti—With Janis Siegel and Fred Hersch. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Nov. 17 at 8.)

Holly Near—With Inti-Illimani. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Nov. 17 at 8.)

African Music Concert—Papa Susso, Abdu Rahman Mangara, and James Makubuya & Ephat Mujuru. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Nov. 18 at 8.)

Modern Jazz Quartet—Winter Garden, World Financial Center. Nov. 19 at 2. No tickets necessary.

"Heavenly Jazz"—Presenting Kenny Davern, Flip Phillips, and others. (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. Nov. 19 at 5. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

Paco Peña—Flamenco guitarist, with an ensemble of dancers and singers. (Town Hall. Nov. 19 at 8.)

Doo-Wop Festival—Nov. 15: The Teenagers, the Knockouts, and Vito Balsamo. . . . ¶ Nov. 16: The Chaperones, the Emotions, and the Chantels. . . . ¶ Nov. 17: The Chimes, the Classics, and the Elegants. . . . ¶ Nov. 18: The Excellents, Don & Juan, and the Shells. . . . ¶ Nov. 19: The Teenchords, Reparata & the Del Rons, the Jesters, and the Paragons. (Criterion Cabaret, Broadway at 45th St. 239-6200. Wednesday through Saturday at 7 and 9, and Sunday at 3 and 7.)

New Music America—The concerts at the following eight locations are part of a festival that runs through Nov. 18. **DANCE THEATRE WORKSHOP**—Nov. 13 at 8: Robin Holcomb, with Wayne Horvitz, Syd Straw, and others. . . . ¶ Nov. 14 at 8: Jay Clayton and Urszula Dudziak. . . . ¶ Nov. 16-18 at 8: Stewart Wallace and Michael Korie's chamber opera, "Kabbalah." With ten singer-dancers, directed by Ann Carlson. (There are post-festival performances of this work on Nov. 19, Nov. 22, and Nov. 24-26.) (219 W. 19th St. 924-0077.) . . . **ROULETTE**—Nov. 13: Steve Beresford. . . . ¶ Nov. 15: Chunk. . . . ¶ Nov. 17: Davey Williams and LaDonna Smith. (228 West Broadway. Concerts at 8 and 10. For information about tickets, call 219-8242.) . . . **BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC**—Nov. 14 at 8: Works by Ed Wilkerson, Fred Frith, and Ingram Marshall. . . . ¶ Nov. 16 at 8: Tania León conducting the Brooklyn Philharmonic in works by John Zorn, Butch Morris, Moondog, and others. . . . ¶ Nov. 18 at 8: Night of a Thousand Bands, including the Ordinaires (see above), the Butthole Surfers, Bobby Previte, Ned Rothenberg and Paul Dresher, the World Saxophone Quartet, and others. (30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100.) . . . **THE WORLD**—Nov. 15 at 10: Ginger Baker, Ronald Shannon Jackson, and Farafina. (254 E. 2nd St. 477-8677.) . . . **EXPERIMENTAL INTERMEDIA**—Nov. 13 at 7: Larry Kucharz. . . . At 8:30: George Lewis and Don Ritter. . . . At 10: Mary Jane Leach. . . . At 11:30: Phill Niblock. . . . ¶ Nov. 15 at 7: Ben Neill, Ushio Torikai, and Peter Cusak, with Ron Kuivila. . . . At 8:30: With Nicolas Collins. . . . At 10: With Joel Ryan. . . . ¶ Nov. 16-17 at 7: Members of the Hub, a composers' collective. (224 Centre St. 431-5127.) . . . **P.S. 122**—Nov. 15 at 8: Eugene Chadbourne, Lenny Kaye, Tom Shepard, and others. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.) . . . **THE KITCHEN**—Nov. 17 at 8 and 10: Carl Stone, Steinski, and Derrick May. (512 W. 19th St. 255-5793.) . . . **SYMPHONY SPACE**—Nov. 18, starting at 1: A six-hour marathon of music by Frederic Rzewski, with Mr. Rzewski, Steve Lacy, Musica Elettronica Viva, Zeitgeist, Steven Ben Israel, and Carol Plantamura. (Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.) . . . **NOTE:** Butch Morris, the composer, conductor, and cornettist, has taken up residence at the Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris, through Nov. 16. There he holds free daily workshops and concerts. For information, call 878-2453.

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Giants—Vs. Seattle Seahawks, Nov. 19 at 4.

Rangers—Vs. the Winnipeg Jets, Nov. 20 at 7:30.

Islanders—Vs. the Philadelphia Flyers, Nov. 14. . . . ¶ Vs. the Toronto Maple Leafs, Nov. 16. . . . ¶ Vs. the Winnipeg Jets, Nov. 21. (Game time, 7:35.)

Devils—Vs. the Minnesota North Stars, Nov. 15. . . . ¶ Vs. the Rangers, Nov. 17. (Game time, 7:45.)

Knicks—Vs. the Minnesota Timberwolves, Nov. 18 at 8:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Houston Rockets, Nov. 21 at 8.

Nets—Vs. the Cleveland Cavaliers, Nov. 14. . . . ¶ Vs. the San Antonio Spurs, Nov. 18. (Game time, 7:30.)

(The Giants, the Devils, and the Nets play at the Meadowlands, 1-201 935-3900; the Rangers and the Knicks play at Madison Square Garden, 563-8300; and the Islanders play at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 587-9222.)

CHAMPIONSHIPS

Tennis—Steffi Graf, Martina Navratilova, Gabriela Sabatini, Monica Seles, and others in the annual indoor tournament for women sponsored by Virginia Slims. (Madison Square Garden. Nov. 13-17 at 5:45, Nov. 18 at noon, and Nov. 19 at 1. For information about tickets, call 563-8954.)

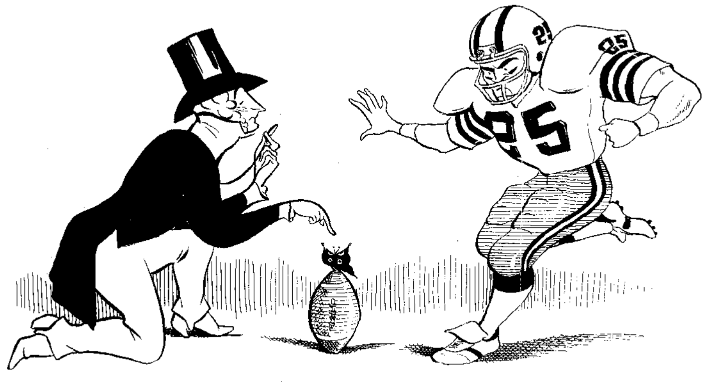
ABOVE AND BEYOND

Light Shows—Near holiday time, a Manhattanite's craving for wattage grows even keener; luckily, the first two of many seasonal illuminations will occur this week. At the American Museum of Natural History, a thousand folded-paper ornaments—depicting creatures real, imaginary, and extinct—will suddenly dance in the light of thousands of bulbs, on the fir tree in the lobby (Nov. 20 at 3). Also, on Nov. 22 the lights at the top of the Empire State Building will change, from red and yellow to red and green.

Book Fair—More than a hundred publishers have contributed new books to a two-day sale. The proceeds go to the homeless. (Goddard-Riverside Community Center, 593 Columbus Ave., at 88th St. Nov. 18-19, from 10 to 6.)

Poetry Readings—Poems by Elizabeth Bishop, read by Anne Jackson and Elizabeth Bove, Nov. 14 at 8. (National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Deborah Digges, reading from her own work, Nov. 15 at 8. (Tisch Hall, New York University, 40 W. 4th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ John Ashbery and James Schuyler, reading from their own work, Nov. 20 at 8. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.) . . . ¶ Fernando Pessoa's poems, read by José Blanco and Edwin Honig, in Portuguese and English, Nov. 21 at 6. (Donnell Library Auditorium, 20 W. 53rd St. No tickets necessary.)

Tributes—To Bernard Malamud: Readings and recollections by various friends and fans, including Helen Frankenthaler, Bharati Mukherjee, Maggie Scarf, and Lore Segal. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Nov. 17 at 8. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ To Raymond Carver: A dramatic reading, by Maria Tucci and James Naughton, of several Carver stories, and a poetry reading by Tess Gallagher. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Nov. 20 at 8.)



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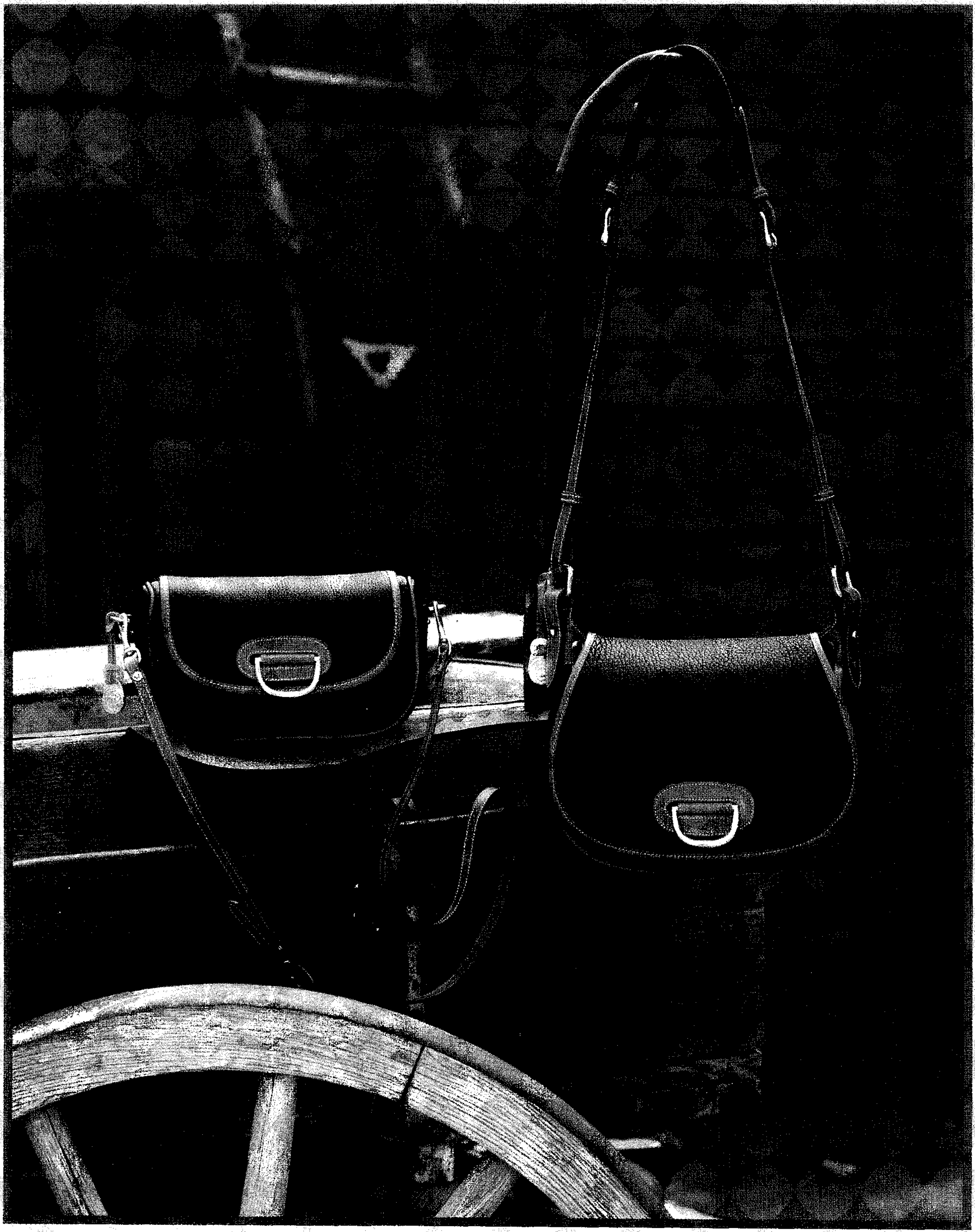

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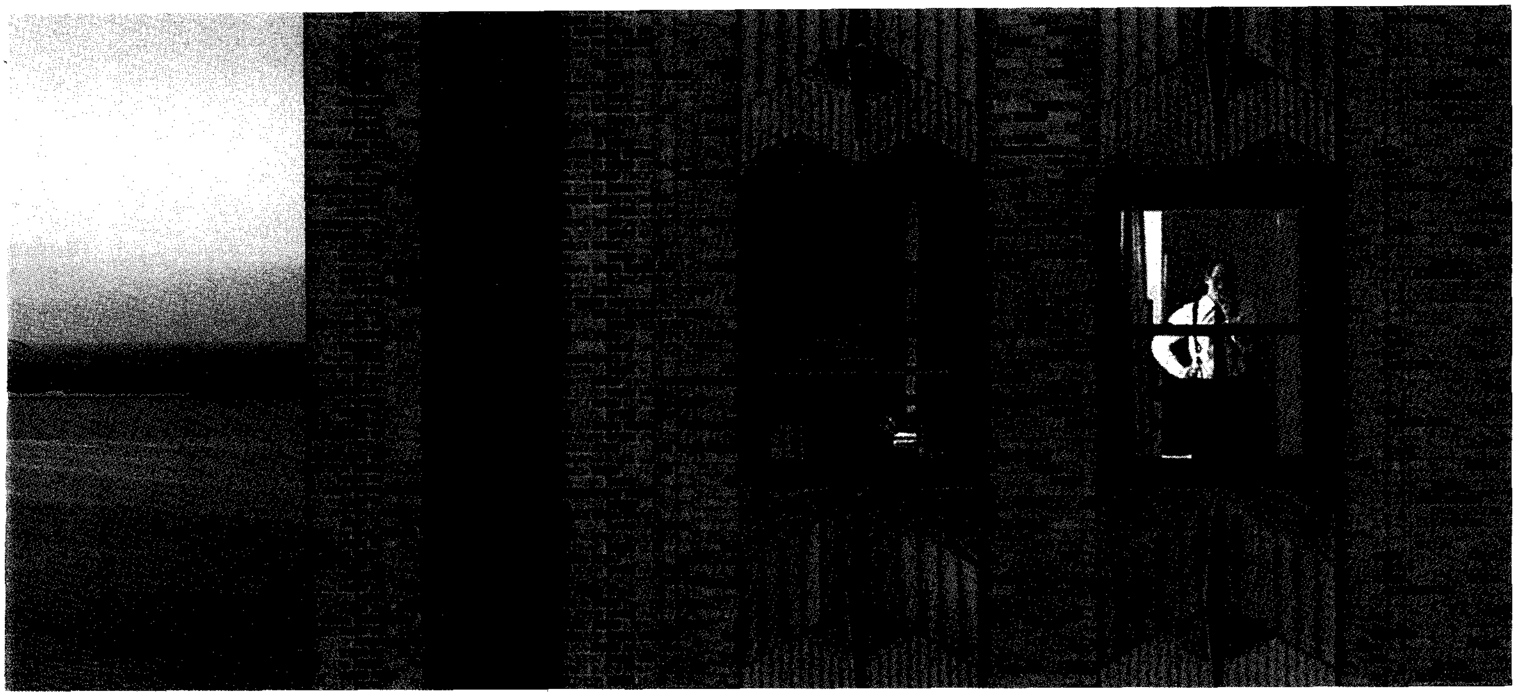

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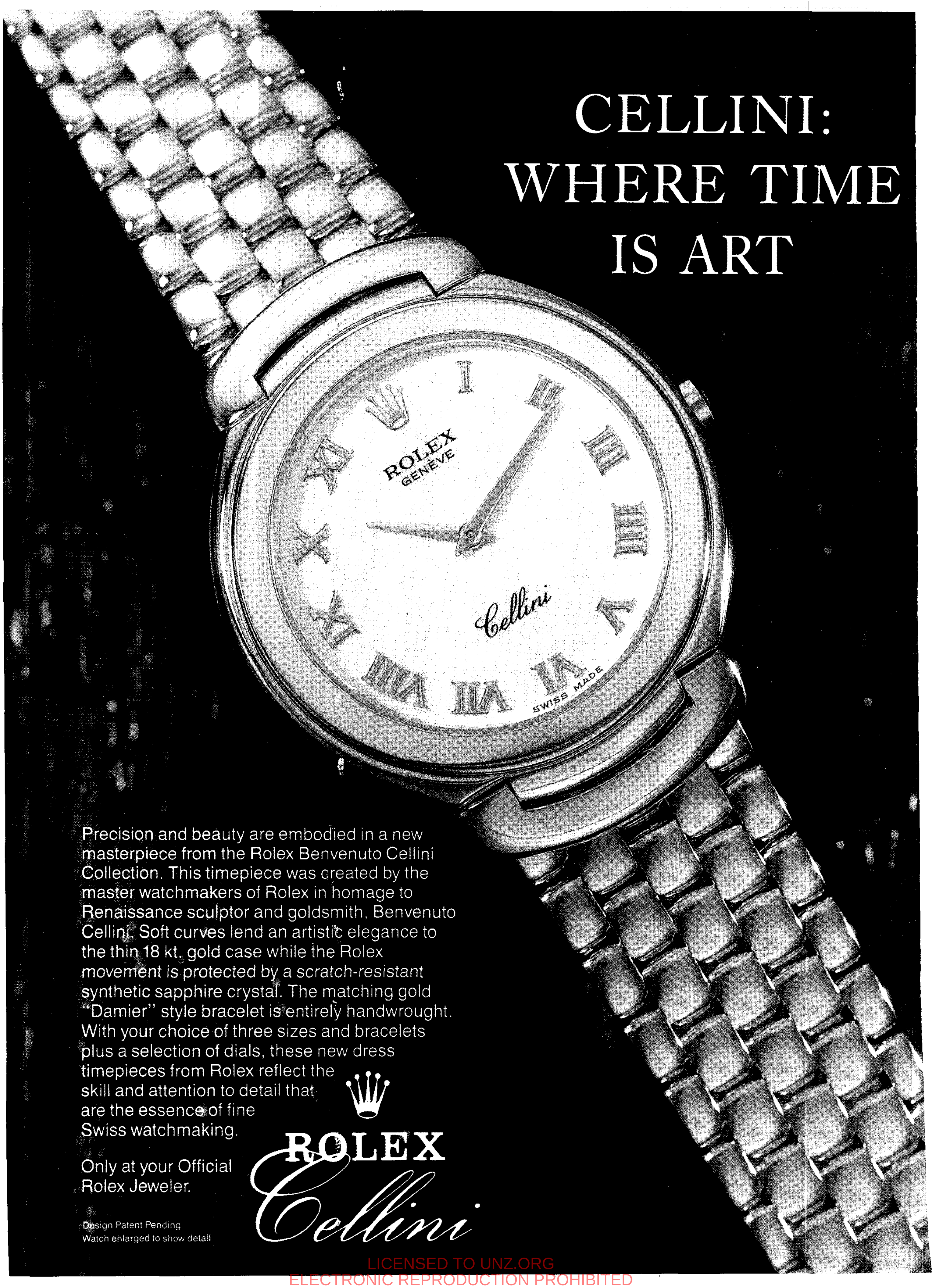

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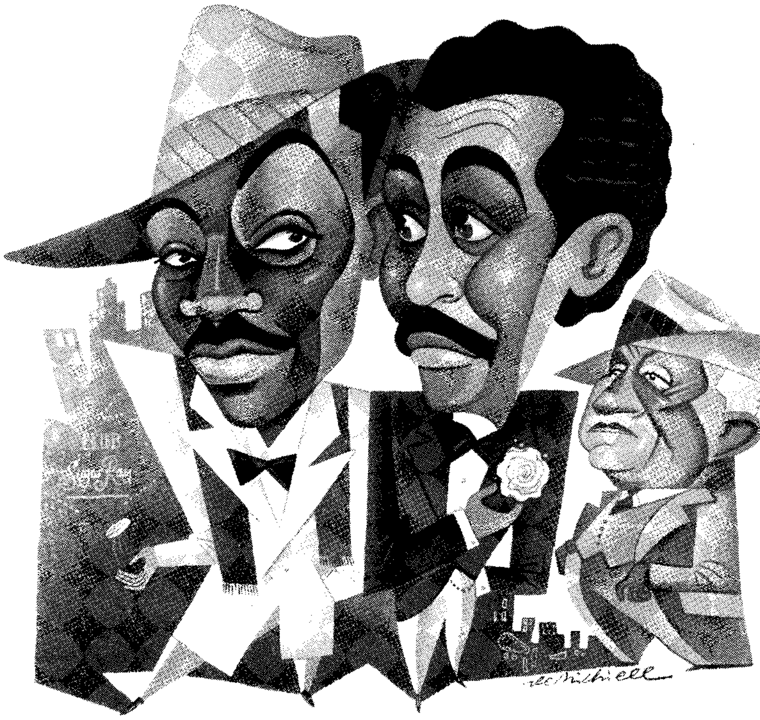
GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 32.



Eddie Murphy, Richard Pryor, and Redd Foxx in "Harlem Nights"

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)

Theatre 1: "Erik the Viking" (directed by Terry Jones), with Tim Robbins and John Cleese.

Theatre 2: "Look Who's Talking" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta and Kirstie Alley.

Theatre 3: "Hawks" (Robert Ellis Miller), with Timothy Dalton and Anthony Edwards.

Theatre 4: "Communion" (Philippe Mora), with Christopher Walken, Lindsay Crouse, and Frances Sternhagen.

Theatre 5: "A Dry White Season" (†).

Theatre 6: "Drugstore Cowboy" (†).

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)

Through Nov. 16: Brazilian documentary films.

From Nov. 17: "The Entertainer" (†).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 35 E. 8th. (477-6600)

Theatre 1: "The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Bear" (†).

Theatre 3: Through Nov. 16: "Second Sight" (Joel Zwick), with John Larroquette and Bronson Pinchot. From Nov. 17: "Steel Magnolias" (Herbert Ross), with Sally Field, Dolly Parton, and Julia Roberts.

Bijou Cinema, 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)

"The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†).

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)

Theatre 1: Starting Nov. 17: "Harlem Nights" (Eddie Murphy), with Murphy, Richard Pryor, and Redd Foxx.

Theatre 2: Starting Nov. 17: "Harlem Nights."

Theatre 3: Starting Nov. 17: "True Love" (Nancy Savoca), with Annabella Sciorra and Ron Eldard.

Theatre 4: Starting Nov. 17: "Valmont" (Miloš Forman), with Colin Firth, Annette Bening, and Meg Tilly.

Theatre 5: Starting Nov. 17: "All Dogs Go to Heaven" (Don Bluth), an animated film.

Theatre 6: Starting Nov. 17: "High Stakes" (Amos Kollek), with Sally Kirkland.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)

Through Nov. 14: "Dealers" (Colin Bucksey), with Paul McGann and Rebecca De Mornay.

From Nov. 15: "The Little Mermaid" (John Musker and Ron Clements), an animated film.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)

"Dad" (†).

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)

Theatre 1: "Communion" (Philippe Mora), with Christopher Walken, Lindsay Crouse, and Frances Sternhagen.

Theatre 2: "Crimes and Misdemeanors" (†).

Theatre 3: Through Nov. 16: "Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas and Andy Garcia. From Nov. 17: "Harlem Nights" (Eddie Murphy), with Murphy, Richard Pryor, and Redd Foxx.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)

"The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)

"Best of the Best" (Bob Radler), with Eric Roberts, James Earl Jones, and Sally Kirkland.

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)

Through Nov. 14: "True Love" (Nancy Savoca), with Annabella Sciorra and Ron Eldard.

From Nov. 15: "The Little Mermaid" (John Musker and Ron Clements), an animated film.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)

Through Nov. 16: "Worth Winning" (Will Mackenzie), with Mark Harmon.

From Nov. 17: "All Dogs Go to Heaven" (Don Bluth), an animated film.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)

"Immediate Family" (Jonathan Kaplan), with Glenn Close and James Woods.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)

Theatre 1: "The Phantom of the Opera" (Dwight H. Little), with Robert Englund.

Theatre 2: "Shocker" (Wes Craven).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)

Through Nov. 16: "Sea of Love" (†).

From Nov. 17: "Prancer" (John Hancock), with Sam Elliott, Cloris Leachman, and Rebecca Harrell.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)

Theatre 1: "Staying Together" (Lee Grant), with Sean Astin, Dermot Mulroney, and Tim Quill.

Theatre 2: "The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)

Theatre 1: Through Nov. 16: "Forced March" (†). From Nov. 17: "Valmont" (Miloš Forman), with Colin Firth, Annette Bening, and Meg Tilly.

Theatre 2: Through Nov. 16: "Second Sight" (Joel Zwick), with John Larroquette and Bronson Pinchot. From Nov. 17: "Times to Come" (Gustavo Mosquera).

Theatre 3: "Sidewalk Stories" (Charles Lane), with Lane and Nicole Alysia.

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)

Theatre 1: Through Nov. 14: "The Bear" (†). From Nov. 15: "Steel Magnolias" (Herbert Ross), with Sally Field, Dolly Parton, and Julia Roberts.

Theatre 2: "Look Who's Talking" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)

"Dad" (†).

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)

Theatre 1: Through Nov. 16: "Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas and Andy Garcia. From Nov. 17: "Harlem Nights" (Eddie Murphy), with Murphy, Richard Pryor, and Redd Foxx.

Theatre 2: "Communion" (Philippe Mora), with Christopher Walken, Lindsay Crouse, and Frances Sternhagen.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)

Through Nov. 16: "Queen of Hearts" (Jon Amiel.)

From Nov. 17: "The Hungarian Fairy Tale" (1987, Gyula Gazdog; in Hungarian).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)

"Crimes and Misdemeanors" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)

Through Nov. 16: "Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas.

From Nov. 17: "Harlem Nights" (Eddie Murphy), with Murphy, Richard Pryor, and Redd Foxx.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)

Theatre 1: "Staying Together" (Lee Grant), with Sean Astin, Dermot Mulroney, and Tim Quill.

Theatre 2: "The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†).

Loews Orpheum I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)

Theatre 1: "Best of the Best" (Bob Radler), with Eric Roberts, James Earl Jones, and Sally Kirkland.

Theatre 2: "Sea of Love" (†).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)

Theatre 1: Through Nov. 14: "Second Sight" (Joel Zwick), with John Larroquette and Bronson Pinchot. From Nov. 15: "True Love" (Nancy Savoca), with Annabella Sciorra and Ron Eldard.

Theatre 2: Through Nov. 14: "Shocker" (Wes Craven). From Nov. 15: "The Little Mermaid" (John Musker and Ron Clements), an animated film.

WEST SIDE

Bleecker Street Cinema I and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)

Theatre 1: Through Nov. 16: (Separate admissions) "Seduction: The Cruel Woman" (directed by Monika Truet and Elfi Mikesch); and "Making 'Do the Right Thing' " (St. Clair Bourne) and "Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads" (Spike Lee). From Nov. 17: "The Everlasting Secret Family" (Michael Thornhill).

Theatre 2: Through Nov. 16: "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" (Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish), with Carmen Maura, Fernando Guillén, and Julieta Serrano. From Nov. 17: (Separate admissions) "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" and "Seduction: The Cruel Woman."

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)

Theatre 1: "Immediate Family" (Jonathan Kaplan), with Glenn Close and James Woods.

Theatre 2: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)

"Crimes and Misdemeanors" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)

Theatre 1: "Staying Together" (Lee Grant),

MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

with Sean Astin, Dermot Mulroney, and Tim Quill.

Theatre 2: "Dad" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)

Theatre 1: "Thelonious Monk: Straight, No Chaser" (Charlotte Zwerin), a documentary.

Theatre 2: "Queen of Hearts" (Jon Amiel).

Theatre 3: "Apartment Zero" (Martin Donovan), with Colin Firth and Hart Bochner.

Theatre 4: "Sidewalk Stories" (Charles Lane), with Lane and Nicole Alysia.

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)

Theatre 1: "Staying Together" (Lee Grant), with Sean Astin, Dermot Mulroney, and Tim Quill.

Theatre 2: Through Nov. 16: "Immediate Family" (Jonathan Kaplan), with Glenn Close and James Woods. From Nov. 17: "Steel Magnolias" (Herbert Ross), with Sally Field, Dolly Parton, and Julia Roberts.

Theatre 3: "Dad" (†).

Theatre 4: "Look Who's Talking" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta and Kirstie Alley.

Theatre 5: Through Nov. 16: "Sea of Love" (†). From Nov. 17: "Prancer" (John Hancock), with Sam Elliott, Cloris Leachman, and Rebecca Harrell.

Theatre 6: "The Bear" (†).

Theatre 7: "Second Sight" (Joel Zwick), with John Larroquette and Bronson Pinchot.

Theatre 8: "A Dry White Season" (†).

Theatre 9: "The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)

Theatre 1: "Shocker" (Wes Craven).

Theatre 2: "Best of the Best" (Bob Radler), with Eric Roberts, James Earl Jones, and Sally Kirkland.

Theatre 3: "The Phantom of the Opera" (Dwight H. Little), with Robert Englund.

Worldwide Cinemas, 49th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)

Theatre 1: "Dad" (†).

Theatre 2: "Dealers" (Colin Bucksey), with Paul McGann and Rebecca De Mornay.

Theatre 3: "The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†).

Theatre 4: "Immediate Family" (Jonathan Kaplan), with Glenn Close and James Woods.

Theatre 5: "Sea of Love" (†).

Theatre 6: "The Phantom of the Opera" (Dwight H. Little), with Robert Englund.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)

Through Nov. 14: "Gross Anatomy" (Thom Eberhardt), with Matthew Modine.

From Nov. 15: "The Little Mermaid" (John Musker and Ron Clements), an animated film.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)

"The Bear" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)

Through Nov. 16: "Erik the Viking" (Terry Jones), with Tim Robbins and John Cleese.

From Nov. 17: "Prancer" (John Hancock), with Sam Elliott, Cloris Leachman, and Rebecca Harrell.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)

Through Nov. 14: "Thelonious Monk: Straight, No Chaser" (Charlotte Zwerin), a documentary.

From Nov. 15: "True Love" (Nancy Savoca), with Annabella Sciorra and Ron Eldard.

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)

"Drugstore Cowboy" (†).

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)

Through Nov. 14: "A Dry White Season" (†).

From Nov. 15: "Tora-San Goes to Vienna" (Yoji Yamada; in Japanese).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)

"Henry V" (Kenneth Branagh), with Branagh and Paul Scofield.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)

"Dealers" (Colin Bucksey), with Paul McGann and Rebecca De Mornay.

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)

Through Nov. 16: "Fat Man and Little Boy" (†).

From Nov. 17: "Steel Magnolias" (Herbert Ross), with Sally Field, Dolly Parton, and Julia Roberts.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)

Theatre 1: "My Left Foot" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Little Thief" (†).

Theatre 3: Through Nov. 16: "Yaaba" (Idrissa Ouedraogo; in Moore). From Nov. 17: "Story of Women" (Claude Chabrol; in French), with Isabelle Huppert.

Cinema Studio 1 and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)

Theatre 1: Through Nov. 16: "Story of Women" (Claude Chabrol; in French), with Isabelle Huppert. From Nov. 17: "Mystery Train" (Jim Jarmusch).

Theatre 2: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

Through Nov. 16: "The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†).

From Nov. 17: "Valmont" (Miloš Forman), with Colin Firth, Annette Bening, and Meg Tilly.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: "The Bear" (†).

Theatre 2: "Crimes and Misdemeanors" (†).

Theatre 3: Through Nov. 16: "Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas and Andy Garcia. From Nov. 17: "Harlem Nights" (Eddie Murphy), with Murphy, Richard Pryor, and Redd Foxx.

Theatre 4: Through Nov. 14: "Second Sight" (Joel Zwick), with John Larroquette and Bronson Pinchot. From Nov. 15: "The Little Mermaid" (John Musker and Ron Clements), an animated film.

Theatre 5: Through Nov. 16: "Communion" (Philippe Mora), with Christopher Walken, Lindsay Crouse, and Frances Sternhagen. From Nov. 17: "All Dogs Go to Heaven" (Don Bluth), an animated film.

Theatre 6: "Look Who's Talking" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta and Kirstie Alley.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: "The Phantom of the Opera" (Dwight H. Little), with Robert Englund.

Theatre 2: Through Nov. 16: "Dad" (†). From Nov. 17: "The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: "Shocker" (Wes Craven).

Theatre 2: "Staying Together" (Lee Grant), with Sean Astin, Dermot Mulroney, Tim Quill, Melinda Dillon, and Stockard Channing.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: "Communion" (directed by Philippe Mora), with Christopher Walken, Lindsay Crouse, and Frances Sternhagen.

Theatre 2: "Communion."

Theatre 3: "Staying Together" (Lee Grant), with Sean Astin, Dermot Mulroney, Tim Quill, Melinda Dillon, Stockard Channing, Jim Haynie, Keith Szarabajka, Levon Helm, and Dinah Manoff.

Theatre 4: "Look Who's Talking" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta and Kirstie Alley.

Theatre 5: "Ministry of Vengeance."

Theatre 6: "Best of the Best" (Bob Radler), with Eric Roberts, James Earl Jones, and Sally Kirkland.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)

"Crimes and Misdemeanors" (†).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 2: Through Nov. 16: "Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas and Andy Garcia. From Nov. 17: "All Dogs Go to Heaven" (Don Bluth), an animated film.

Theatre 3: Through Nov. 16: "The Toxic Avenger III: The Last Temptation of Toxie" (Lloyd Kaufman and Michael Herz), with Ron Fazio. From Nov. 17: "Prancer" (John Hancock), with Sam Elliott, Cloris Leachman, and Rebecca Harrell.

Theatre 4: Through Nov. 16: "An Innocent Man" (Peter Yates), with Tom Selleck and F. Murray Abraham. From Nov. 17: "Black Rain."

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

Through Nov. 16: "Stepfather II" (Jeff Burr), with Terry O'Quinn.

From Nov. 17: "Harlem Nights" (Eddie Murphy), with Murphy, Richard Pryor, and Redd Foxx.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: "The Phantom of the Opera" (Dwight H. Little), with Robert Englund.

Theatre 2: "Halloween 5: The Revenge of Michael Myers" (Dominique Othenin-Girard).

Warner, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)

"Shocker" (Wes Craven).

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)

Theatre 1: Through Nov. 14: "Lethal Weapon 2" (†). From Nov. 15: "The Little Mermaid" (John Musker and Ron Clements), an animated film.

Theatre 2: Through Nov. 14: "Second Sight" (Joel Zwick), with John Larroquette and Bronson Pinchot. From Nov. 15: "The Little Mermaid."

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)

Nov. 13: "Idiot's Delight" (1939, directed by Clarence Brown), with Norma Shearer and Clark Gable; and "Carefree" (1939, Mark Sandrich), with Ginger Rogers, Fred Astaire, and Jack Carson.

Nov. 14-15: "Love Me or Leave Me" (1955, Charles Vidor), with Doris Day, James Cagney, and Cameron Mitchell; and "Meet Danny Wilson" (1952, Joseph Pevney), with Frank Sinatra, Shelley Winters, and Alec Nicol.

Nov. 16: "Sayonara" (1957, Joshua Logan), with Marlon Brando and Red Buttons.

Nov. 17-18: "White Christmas" (1954, Michael Curtiz), with Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney, Vera-Ellen, and Dean Jagger; and "Easter Parade" (1948, Charles Walters), with Fred Astaire, Judy Garland, and Peter Lawford.

Nov. 19-20: "Big City" (1948, Norman Taurog), with Margaret O'Brien, George Murphy, Danny Thomas, and Robert Preston; and "The Great Ziegfeld" (†).

Nov. 21: "The Cocoanuts" (†) and "Young Frankenstein" (†).

Nov. 22: "Kid Millions" (1934, Roy Del Ruth), with Eddie Cantor, Ann Sothern, and Ethel Merman; and "On the Avenue" (1937, Del Ruth), with Madeleine Carroll, Alice Faye, and Dick Powell.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

Through Nov. 14: "Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills" (1989, Paul Bartel), with Jacqueline Bisset, Ray Sharkey, and Ed Begley, Jr.; and "Miracle Mile" (1989, Steve DeJarnatt), with Anthony Edwards and Mare Winningham.

Nov. 15-16: "Austeria" (1971, Jerzy Kawalerowicz); and "Custody" (Weislaw Saniewski).

Nov. 17-18: "The Draughtsman's Contract" (1983, Peter Greenaway), with Anthony Higgins, Janet Suzman, and Anne Louise Lambert; and "Eureka" (1985, Nicolas Roeg), with Gene Hackman, Theresa Russell, Rutger Hauer, and Mickey Rourke.

Nov. 19: "Hiroshima, Mon Amour" (1959, Alain Resnais; in French), with Emmanuèle Riva and Eiji Okada; and "Last Year at Marienbad" (1961, Resnais; in French), with Delphine Seyrig.

Nov. 20-21: "The Hunger" (1983, Tony Scott), with Catherine Deneuve, David Bowie, Susan Sarandon, and Cliff De Young; and "Vampire's Kiss" (1989, Robert Bierman), with Nicolas Cage, Maria Conchita Alonso, and Jennifer Beals.

From Nov. 22: "Once Upon a Time in America" (†).

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)

Through Nov. 14: "Hold Your Man" (1933, Sam Wood), with Jean Harlow and Clark Gable; "Bordertown" (1935, Archie Mayo), with Paul Muni, Bette Davis, and Margaret Lindsay; and "A Slight Case of Murder" (1938, Lloyd Bacon), with Edward G. Robinson, Allen Jenkins, and Jane Bryan.

Nov. 15-16: "Lord Love a Duck" (1966, George Axelrod), with Tuesday Weld, Roddy McDowall, Lola Albright, and Ruth Gordon; and "Heathers" (1989, Michael Lehmann), with Winona Ryder and Christian Slater.

Nov. 17: "The Godfather" (†).

Nov. 18: "The Godfather, Part II" (†).

Nov. 19: "The Gospel According to St. Matthew" (1966, Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian), with a cast of nonprofessionals; and "Accattone!" (1961, Pasolini; in Italian).

Nov. 20-21: "Lady in the Lake" (1947, Robert Montgomery), with Montgomery, Audrey Totter, Lloyd Nolan, and Leon Ames; "Cry Terror!" (1958, Andrew Stone), with James Mason, Inger Stevens, and Rod Steiger; and "Trapped" (1949, Richard Fleischer), with Lloyd Bridges.

From Nov. 22: "The Night of the Hunter" (1955, Charles Laughton), with Robert Mitchum, Shelley Winters, and Lillian Gish; and "Wise Blood" (1979, John Huston), with Brad Dourif, Ned Beatty, Harry Dean Stanton, and Amy Wright.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Nov. 13: "Ordet" (1955, Carl Dreyer; in Danish); and "The Magician" (1958,

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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Ingrid Thulin, Max von Sydow, and Gunnar Björnstrand.

Nov. 14: "The Hustler" (1961, Robert Rossen), with Paul Newman, Jackie Gleason, Piper Laurie, Myron McCormick, and George C. Scott; and "Cool Hand Luke" (1967, Stuart Rosenberg), with Newman.

Nov. 15: "Libeled Lady" (1936, Jack Conway), with Jean Harlow, William Powell, Myrna Loy, and Spencer Tracy; and "Love Crazy" (1941, Conway), with Loy and Powell.

Nov. 16: "The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner" (1962, Tony Richardson), with Michael Redgrave and Tom Courtenay; and "The Loved One" (1965, Richardson), with Robert Morse.

Nov. 17-18: "Rope" (1948, Alfred Hitchcock), with James Stewart, John Dall, and Farley Granger; and "Rear Window" (1954, Hitchcock), with Stewart, Grace Kelly, and Wendell Corey.

Nov. 19: "Jezebel" (1938, William Wyler), with Bette Davis, Henry Fonda, George Brent, and Fay Bainter; and "The Letter" (1940, Wyler), with Davis, Herbert Marshall, James Stephenson, Frieda Inescort, and Gale Sondergaard.

Nov. 20: "Lucrèce Borgia" (1935, Abel Gance; in French), with Edwige Feuillère; and "Volpone" (1939, Maurice Tourneur; in French), with Harry Baur and Louis Jouvet.

Nov. 21: "The Divorce of Lady X" (1937, Tim Whelan), with Merle Oberon and Laurence Olivier; and "Clouds Over Europe" (1939, Whelan), with Olivier, Valerie Hobson, and Ralph Richardson.

Nov. 22: "The River" (1951, Jean Renoir), with Nora Swinburne and Arthur Shields; and "The Southerner" (1945, Renoir), with Betty Field and Zachary Scott.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)

THEATRE 1: Nov. 17 at 2:30: "Noah's Ark" (1928, directed by Michael Curtiz), with Dolores Costello and George O'Brien; and two short films. . . . ¶ Nov. 18 at 1:30: "Don Juan" (1926, Alan Crosland), with John Barrymore and Mary Astor; and eight short films. . . . ¶ Nov. 18 at 5: "The Jazz Singer" (1927, Crosland), with Al Jolson, Mary McAvoy, and Warner Oland. . . . ¶ Nov. 19 at 2: "White Shadows in the South Seas" (1928, W. S. Van Dyke), with Monte Blue and Raquel Torres. . . . ¶ Nov. 19 at 5: "The Divine Lady" (1929, Frank Lloyd), with Corinne Griffith, Victor Varconi, and H. B. Warner. . . . ¶ Nov. 20 at 2:30: "Lights of New York" (1928, Brian Foy), with Helene Costello, Cullen Landis, and Eugene Pallette; and four short films. . . . ¶ Nov. 20 at 6: "The First Auto" (1927, Roy Del Ruth), with Barney Oldfield, Patsy Ruth Miller, and Charles Mack; and two short films. . . . ¶ Nov. 21 at 2:30: "Don Juan" and eight short films.

THEATRE 2: Films from Canada. Nov. 13 at 3: "Woman Against the World" (1937, David Selman), with Ralph Forbes; and "Convicted" (1937, Leon Barsha), with Rita Hayworth. . . . Nov. 13 at 6 and Nov. 14 at 3: "Carry on Sergeant!" (1928, Bruce Bairnsfather), with Hugh Buckler. . . . Nov. 14 at 6 and Nov. 17 at 3: "The Hart of London" (1970, Jack Chambers). . . . Nov. 17 at 6: "Woman Against the World" and "Convicted." . . . Nov. 18 at 2:30: "Drylanders" (1963, Donald Haldane), with Frances Hyland. . . . Nov. 18 at 5: "Goin' Down the Road" (1970, Donald Shebib), with Doug McGrath. . . . Nov. 19 at 2:30: "Nobody Waved Goodbye" (1964, Don Owen), with Peter Kastner. . . . Nov. 19 at 5 and Nov. 21 at 3: "Little Aurore's Tragedy" (1952, Jean-Yves Bigras; in French), with Yvonne Laflamme. . . . Nov. 21 at 6: "Drylanders." . . . ¶ Nov.16 at 3 and 6: "Nobody Listened" (1988, Nester Almendros and Jorge Ulla), a documentary. . . . ¶ Nov. 18-19 at noon: Two different programs of "Sesame Street" episodes.

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—Nov. 14 at 1:30: "Point of Order!" (1964, Emile de Antonio). . . . ¶ Nov. 14 at 3:30: "What's Up Tiger Lily?" (1966), a Japanese film, with English dialogue by Woody Allen. . . . ¶ Nov. 14 at 6: "Fire of Waters" (1965, Stan Brakhage), "Meet Marlon Brando" (1965, Albert and David Maysles), and "The Secret Cinema" (1966, Paul Bartel). . . . ¶ Nov. 15 at noon: "Sins of the Fleshapoids" (1965, Mike Kuchar), "Hold Me While I'm Naked" (1966, George Kuchar), and "The Great Blondino" (1967, Robert Nelson). . . . ¶ Nov. 15 at 2:30: "Valley of the Dolls" (1967, Mark Robson), with Barbara Parkins. . . . ¶ Nov. 16 at noon: "Don't Look Back" (1965, D. A. Pennebaker). . . . ¶ Nov. 16 at 2:30: "Bonnie and Clyde" (1967, Arthur Penn), with Warren Beatty, Faye Dunaway, Gene Hackman, and Estelle Parsons. . . . ¶ Nov. 17 at noon: "The Flicker" (1966, Tony Conrad), and four short films. . . . ¶ Nov. 17 at 2:30: "Targets" (1968, Peter Bogdanovich), with Boris Karloff and Tim O'Kelly. . . . ¶ Nov. 18 at noon: "Vice-President Richard Nixon and Senator John F. Kennedy Debate" (1960) and an episode of "The Twilight Zone." . . . ¶ Nov. 18 at 2:30: An episode of "Route 66" and "CBS Reports: Harvest of Shame" (1960). . . . ¶ Nov. 19 at 1: "ABC's Wide World of Sports"; and "Telstar: U.S. to Europe" (1962). . . . ¶ Nov. 19 at 3:30: "A Tour of the White House with Mrs. John F. Kennedy" (1962); and an episode of "The Dick Van Dyke Show." . . . ¶ Nov. 21 at 1:30: "Kovacs Specials" and "The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson." . . . ¶ Nov. 21 at 3:30: "Crisis: Behind a Presidential Commitment" (1963); and "Civil Rights March on Washington Led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." (1963) . . . ¶ Nov. 21 at 6: "That Was the Week That Was."

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—Nov. 17 at 6:30: "Tora-San's Memorial Day of Salad" (1988, Yoji Yamada; in Japanese), with Kiyoshi Atsumi and Yoshiko Mita.

CZECHOWSKI

At Theatre 80 St. Marks, James Stewart in "Rear Window"

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

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B Roberts

At Theatre 80 St. Marks, "Lucrèce Borgia"

(The following movie notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

The Bear—This French-made version of the romantic-wilderness pictures that Hollywood turned out in the silent era is a combination of raw pulp and gooey kitsch. A whimpering orphaned bear cub tries to attach himself to a huge male bear (nine feet two and weighing two thousand pounds), who has been shot in the shoulder and growls, rebuffing the infant. The plucky cub's feelings are hurt, but he ignores the threats, and follows the big bear, pleading for acceptance; he comes close enough to clean the wound with his tongue, and soon the two are kissing and licking. They have "bonded"; the music swells, and our hearts are supposed to be swelling, too. The director, Jean-Jacques Annaud, and the screenwriter, Gérard Brach, devised the plan for a gory, sentimental myth and then tried to get animals to act out the parts of the story that couldn't be faked; they fell back on sleight-of-hand cutting that never quite covers up the gaps. The human grunts and groans of the cornered big bear and the cub's constant crying out in terror are usually as close to telling the story as the film gets. The movie doesn't exist except for its dubbed sound effects. Set in British Columbia in 1885; shot in the Austrian Tyrol and Northern Italy. Based on James Oliver Curwood's 1916 novel "The Grizzly King." —P.K. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/13/89.) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Gemini; through Nov. 14.)

The Cocoanuts (1929)—The Marx Brothers' first feature, shot in Paramount's Astoria Studios, on Long Island, is a somewhat cumbersome transcription of their Broadway musical-comedy hit about the Florida land boom. Most of the action takes place in a hotel lobby; the characters walk on and off, as if they were in a stage play, and they do stage business. The material hasn't been paced for the screen; there are dead spots

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IN BRIEF—Cont'd

(without even background music), but there are also a lot of funny verbal routines and a musical burlesque of "Carmen," and Harpo, as a fiendish pickpocket, is much faster (and less aesthetic and self-conscious and innocent) than in the Brothers' later comedies. With Kay Francis in her then daring mannish hairdo as Penelope, a jewel thief; Margaret Dumont in lace dresses and floppy hats as the rich Mrs. Potter, the possessor of a valuable necklace; and a pair of forgettable singing lovers (Mary Eaton and Oscar Shaw). Based on the musical play by George S. Kaufman and Morrie Ryskind, with music and lyrics by Irving Berlin, adapted by Ryskind, and directed by Joseph Santley and Robert Florey.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Nov. 21.)

Crimes and Misdemeanors—Written and directed by Woody Allen, it's a sad, censuring look at an eminent ophthalmologist (Martin Landau) and other crooks in high places who (in Allen's view) have convinced themselves that they can do anything, because they don't think God is watching. Allen is making the film equivalent of a play of ideas, and the ideas have no excitement. He's telling us not just what we already know but what we've already rejected. Woody Allen himself plays a little, grubbing-for-a-living documentary filmmaker who falls in love but can't compete for the woman (Mia Farrow) against a darling of the media, a tall, egomaniacal TV producer played with a wonderfully smug, screwy abandon by Alan Alda. Except for Alda, and Landau (when he's showing nervous impatience), and Jerry Orbach, who plays the ophthalmologist's shady brother, most of the large cast is proficient yet brittle and dull. With Sam Waterston (as a rabbi who's going blind), Anjelica Huston, Claire Bloom, Joanna Gleason, Caroline Aaron, Nora Ephron in a bit, and Daryl Hannah—uncredited, but looking so luscious she almost stops the show. The bland cinematography is by Sven Nykvist.—P.K. (10/30/89) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews Tower East, 8th Street Playhouse, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1.)

Dad—Making his first movie, Gary David Goldberg, the "creator" of the TV series "Family Ties," has attempted to open his sitcom sensibility to real life; he's filled "Dad" with therapeutic lore about old age and hospital care, as if moviemaking were a form of community service. Now seventy-eight and retired from his blue-collar job, Dad (Jack Lemmon) is dominated by his wife (Olympia Dukakis), who does everything for him, enfeebling him. But when his wife has a heart attack and is hospitalized, his Wall Street investment-banker son (Ted Danson) arrives, moves in with him, and stirs him to action: the helpless old coot comes alive. That's only the beginning; the movie keeps going through permutations until, finally, the banker hero's devotion to Dad helps him reach out to his own (estranged, college-age) son, played by Ethan Hawke. This is a saga: three (television) generations. At the start, Lemmon has vanished almost totally into his role, but soon he's so insufferably perky and boyish and obliging that you feel he deserves the puling lines that Goldberg gives him. With Kathy Baker, Kevin Spacey, Zakes Mokae, and J. T. Walsh. Based on the William Wharton novel.—P.K. (11/13/89) (Bay Cinema, Beekman, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Metro Cinema; through Nov. 16.)

Drugstore Cowboy—Nihilistic humor rarely bubbles up in a movie as freely as it does here. Set in Portland, Oregon, in 1971, the story is about two couples who live together and travel around the Pacific Northwest robbing hospitals and pharmacies, grabbing fistfuls of pills and capsules. They're like a junkie version of Clyde Barrow's gang. The director, Gus Van Sant, takes us inside a lot of underground attitudes: the druggies are monomaniacal about leading an aimless existence—they see themselves as romantic figures. They're comic, but they're not put down for being comic. The picture keeps you laughing because it's so nonjudgmental. Van Sant is half in and half out of the desire of adolescents to remain kids forever. As the gang's twenty-six-year-old leader, Matt Dillon brings the role a light self-mockery that helps set the tone of the film, and Kelly Lynch is strikingly effective as the leader's wife. Also with James Le Gross, Heather Graham, James Remar, Max Perlich, Beah Richards, Grace Zabriskie, and William Burroughs. The script, by the director and Daniel Yost, was based on an unpublished novel by James Fogle, who's in prison for drug-related robberies.—P.K. (10/30/89) (Angelika Film Center, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

A Dry White Season—In Johannesburg, a naïve white schoolmaster (Donald Sutherland) has his eyes opened to the police brutality involved in the death of his black gardener, and imagines he can obtain justice for the man's family. Marlon Brando is airily light and masterly as the veteran anti-apartheid barrister who takes the case even though he knows that he can't get anywhere with the rigged court. The romantic in Brando must have responded to the old rebel's romantic gesture: he saves the picture for the (short) time he's onscreen. But the director, Euzhan Palcy, seems lost; her work is heavy-handed, and the script (by Colin Welland and the director, from a novel by André Brink) is earnest and didactic. Performers such as Susan Sarandon, Jurgen Prochnow, Winston Ntshona, Janet Suzman, Michael Gambon, and Zakes Mokae sink into the obviousness of their roles and leave no trace. (Poor, uninspired, virtuous Sutherland is out of it; his characterization is one long whimper.)—P.K. (10/2/89) (Angelika Film Center, and Chelsea Cinemas. . . . ¶ Carnegie Screening Room; through Nov. 14.)

"The film of 'The Loved One' is a great annoyance to me," Evelyn Waugh wrote to Nancy Mitford. His agent, he explained, had originally sold the novel's movie rights to "a mad Mexican" (Luis Buñuel!). Then Waugh heard "that an American company had bought the rights from the Mexican and were producing an elaborate travesty." Tony Richardson, who directed the 1965 screen version of Waugh's black comedy about an ornate Los Angeles burial ground, received a postcard from the author saying that he hoped the movie never reached his neighborhood.

"Elaborate travesty" is a half-true description, but it doesn't get across the movie's weird hilarity. The script, by Terry Southern and Christopher Isherwood, combines Waugh's 1948 satiric vision of how America's quest for status and comfort continues after death with Southern's aggressive sixties lampooning of the greed and ingenuity that grease this pursuit. In the film (playing November 16 at Theatre 80 St. Marks), the Whispering Glades cemetery and the Happier Hunting Ground pet cemetery move with the times—by the end, the embalmed "loved ones" are literally rocketed into orbit. The cast includes Robert Morse and Anjanette Comer as the sick-joke romantic leads, and an astonishing array of supporting comedians, including Liberace as a coffin salesman, Rod Steiger as Mr. Joyboy (the top embalmer), John Gielgud and Robert Morley as pillars of the British expatriate community, and a very young Paul Williams as a prodigy rocket scientist (a Doogie Howser prototype?), who provides the movie with its deus ex machina. The movie reduces you to a dizzy state of adolescent disbelief. You think, "They're not going to do that"—but they do.

The Entertainer (1960)—The John Osborne play, set during the Suez crisis of 1956, was staged by Tony Richardson in 1957, starring Laurence Olivier as Archie Rice; it was his greatest contemporary role, and he appears in this film version, again directed by Richardson. The play is a lewd, tragic vaudeville about the life of a bankrupt pursued by creditors, a crapulent song-and-dance man whose emotions break through onstage in stale blue jokes as he ogles the half-naked chorus girls and razzes the orchestra leader. "Don't clap too hard—it's a very old building," he jeers at the patrons, who are sitting on their hands. And if there's mincing hatred in his tone, and the desperate self-disgust of a performer who can't get a response, there's also a trace of affection for the run-down theatre, which suggests dilapidated, crumbling England. The action shifts between the music-hall stage and the rooms that Archie and his wife, Phoebe (Brenda de Banzie), share with his father, Billy Rice (Roger Livesey), who was a headliner in his day but now, in his seventies, is retired to a life of mildewed gentility. Archie, still hanging on at fifty, has never had the purity that his father had—he refers to himself as "old Archie, dead behind the eyes." Osborne can't bring Archie's principled, observant daughter, Jean (Joan Plowright), to life, but when it comes to a character like Archie—a man who does so much to make you hate him that you can't—he gives him a Shakespearean fury. The film errs in many ways, and at times the editing seems glaringly poor, but Olivier's performance gives it venomous excitement. Adapted by Osborne and Nigel Kneale. With Albert Finney, Alan Bates, Shirley Ann Field, Daniel Massey, and Thora Hird.—P.K. (Public Theatre; starting Nov. 17.)

The Fabulous Baker Boys—Two lounge pianists (brothers, played by Beau and Jeff Bridges) add a vocalist (Michelle Pfeiffer) to their act, and she changes their lives. This romantic fantasy has a forties-movie sultriness and an eighties movie-struck melancholy. Put them together and you have a movie in which eighties glamour is being defined. The young writer-director Steve Kloves trips off your bluesy, narcissistic feelings about popular music and commercial-movie emotions; he invites you to laugh if you want to. (You feel the heat even if you're laughing.) The three stars seem perfect at what they're doing—newly minted icons. When Pfeiffer (who does her own singing) delivers "Makin' Whoopee," while crawling over a grand piano like a long-legged kitty-cat, she rivals Rita Hayworth in "Gilda."—P.K. (10/16/89) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Bijou Cinema, 34th St. East, Coronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Regency; through Nov. 16. . . . ¶ Metro Cinema; starting Nov. 17.)

Fat Man and Little Boy—It's about how the collaboration of General Leslie R. Groves (Paul Newman) and J. Robert Oppenheimer (Dwight Schultz) resulted in the atomic bombs' being dropped on Japan. The director, Roland Joffé, and his co-screenwriter, Bruce Robinson, took this inherently dramatic subject and got lost in it; the script is a shambles. Newman, though miscast, is still too smooth to be matched by Schultz—he isn't a forceful enough actor to suggest Oppenheimer's Joan of Arc presence, which kept the collection of scientists together. In this version, both men are diminished: Oppenheimer is just an arrogant, ivory-tower idealist, and the gruff, deceitful Groves seems to pick him for his weakness. With John Cusack, Laura Dern, Natasha Richardson, Bonnie Bedelia, Gerald Hiken, John C. McGinley, and Fred Dalton Thompson. Music by Ennio Morricone. (The TV docudrama "Day One," featuring Brian Dennehy as Groves and David Strathairn as Oppenheimer, shows how the Manhattan Project developed its own momentum; it has the complexity and drive that Joffé's version lacks.)—P.K. (11/13/89) (Loews Paramount; through Nov. 16.)

Forced March—Chris Sarandon plays an American television star, of Hungarian-Jewish parentage, who leaves his Beverly Hills swimming pool and goes to Europe to star in a fact-based film about Miklos Radnoti, the famous Hungarian-Jewish poet—he was killed near the end of the Second World War, during a forced march from a labor camp in Yugoslavia to Hungary. Directed by Rick King, from a script by Dick Atkins and Charles K. Bardosh, the American-Hungarian co-production is about the effect on the

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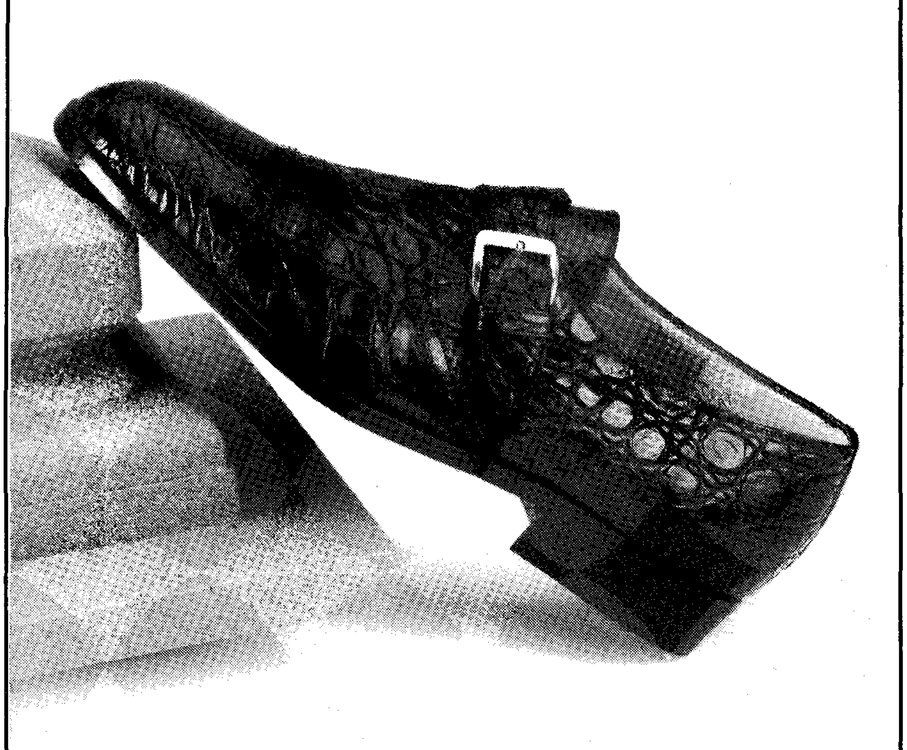

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"spoiled" TV star of playing an authentic, suffering artist of the past. There's an idea here, but the moviemakers don't seem sure what to do with it. The material never comes to enough—it's serious (in a slightly affected way), well paced, and utterly uninspired. It simply isn't as deep as it wants to be. With Josef Sommer, Renée Soutendijk, and John Seitz as the sadistic director of the film within a film.—P.K. (Cinema I; through Nov. 16.)

The Godfather (1972)—A wide, startlingly vivid view of a Mafia dynasty, in which organized crime becomes an obscene nightmare image of American free enterprise. The movie is a popular melodrama with its roots in the gangster films of the thirties, but it expresses a new tragic realism, and it's altogether extraordinary. Francis Ford Coppola directed. Marlon Brando is Don Vito Corleone, with Al Pacino, John Cazale, James Caan, and Talia Shire as his children. The cast includes Robert Duvall, Richard Castellano as Clemenza, Diane Keaton, John Marley, Lenny Montana, Richard Conte, Sterling Hayden, Abe Vigoda, Al Lettieri, Alex Rocco, Richard Bright, Simonetta Stefanelli as Apollonia, Gianni Russo, and Al Martino. The script, credited to Mario Puzo and Coppola, is based on Puzo's best-seller. (The film runs just under three hours; the period is 1945 to the mid-fifties.) Cinematography by Gordon Willis; production design by Dean Tavoularis; music by Nino Rota.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; Nov. 17.)

The Godfather, Part II (1974)—The daring of "Part II" is that it enlarges the scope and deepens the meaning of the first film. Visually, "Part II" is far more complexly beautiful than the first, just as it's thematically richer, more shadowed, fuller. The completed work, contrasting the early manhood of Vito (Robert De Niro) with the life of Michael, his inheritor (Al Pacino), is an epic vision of the corruption of America. (The three hours and twenty minutes of "Part II" span almost seventy years.) Directed by Francis Ford Coppola. The script is credited to Coppola and Mario Puzo, from Puzo's novel. The cast includes Robert Duvall, John Cazale, Lee Strasberg, Michael V. Gazzo, Talia Shire, Troy Donahue, Gianni Russo, Diane Keaton, and a brief appearance by James Caan, and appearances by Phil Feldman, Roger Corman, and William Bowers as United States senators.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; Nov. 18.)

The Great Ziegfeld (1936)—William Powell plays Ziegfeld, and the two Mrs. Ziegfelds are played by Myrna Loy, as Billie Burke, and Luise Rainer, as Anna Held. Fanny Brice is herself, though she isn't onscreen enough to vitalize this lavish, tedious musical biography; it goes on for a whopping three hours, but through some insane editing decision she's cut off in the middle of singing "My Man." Inexplicably, this thing won the Academy Award for Best Picture, and Rainer, who did her heartbreak specialty—smiling through tears and looking irresistibly fragile—was given the Best Actress award. With Ray Bolger, who has a few redemptive moments, and Gilda Gray, Harriet Hoctor, Frank Morgan, Reginald Owen, William Demarest, Leon Errol, Stanley Morner (who became the singing star Dennis Morgan, though here his "Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody" is dubbed by Allan Jones), and Virginia Bruce, who gets glorified to the tune of "You Never Looked So Beautiful Before." Directed by Robert Z. Leonard, from a script by William Anthony McGuire, who had worked for Ziegfeld, as had the set designer, John Harkrider, and the choreographer, Seymour Felix.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Nov. 19-20.)

Lethal Weapon 2—Chases, explosions, fights, barrages of insults, the odd moment of manly sentimentality—these are the standard elements of American action movies in the eighties, and the "Lethal Weapon" movies use them with an amazing lack of shame. There's lots of comedy, but no real relief: the punch lines slam into our brains like cars into plate-glass windows. The only thing that makes this movie at all distinctive is its hero, a reckless L.A. cop named Riggs, a role that allows Mel Gibson to zip through the picture like a free electron. Riggs isn't actually trying to kill himself this time (as he was in the first movie), but he's still a wild man and Gibson is still having a great time playing him. It's a mischievous, sprightly performance: he treats the action sequences as if they were slapstick routines. (Unfortunately, the director, Richard Donner, doesn't have as light a touch.) Danny Glover plays his partner, Murtaugh, an easygoing, conservative black family man; he's mostly called upon to react with horror to Riggs' dangerous antics, and the joke of their relationship gets a little tiresome. (The effect, sometimes, is of a white guy doing heroic stuff while his black pal shuffles along beside him. Glover, a good actor, deserves better.) Joe Pesci does small wonders with his supporting role as a ferrety, motor-mouthed money launderer.—T.R. (West Side Cinema; through Nov. 14.)

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The Little Thief—Claude Miller's movie, set in the early fifties, is about a rebellious provincial teen-ager named Janine (Charlotte Gainsbourg). The screenplay (by Miller, his wife, Annie, and Luc Béraud) is based on an original story by François Truffaut and Claude de Givray; Truffaut himself reportedly planned to direct a film of the story. This movie bears recognizable traces of the late New Wave director: it's gentle-natured and sympathetic to the young, and its structure is casual and anecdotal, like the Doinel movies. What it lacks is Truffaut's energy. Miller is a perfectly decent craftsman, and the movie is never unwatchable, but nothing drives it forward from one scene to the next, and Janine's lucklessness and her tough-kid spirit don't resonate as Antoine's do. For Truffaut, the story wasn't the most important thing; it's all that's left of him in "The Little Thief." In French.—T.R. (9/4/89) (Lincoln Plaza.)

My Left Foot—The greatness of Daniel Day-Lewis's performance as the Dubliner Christy Brown, a victim of cerebral palsy who became a painter and a writer, is that he pulls you inside Christy's frustration and rage (and his bottomless thirst). There's nothing soft or maudlin about this movie's view of Christy: he's anguished and locked in yet excitingly insolent. The movie may tear you apart, but it's the story of a triumphantly tough guy who lived it up, and Day-Lewis's interpretation has some of the sexual seductiveness that was so startling in Olivier's "Richard III." This is the first film of the Irish playwright-director Jim Sheridan, who wrote the superb screenplay with another Irish playwright, Shane Connaughton. With Brenda Fricker, Ray McAnally, Fiona Shaw, Ruth McCabe, and Hugh O'Conor playing Christy as a child.—P.K. (10/2/89) (Lincoln Plaza.)

Once Upon a Time in America (1984)—Just about all the incidents in this three-hour-and-forty-seven-minute film echo scenes in Hollywood gangster movies, but the director, Sergio Leone, inflates them, slows them down, and gives them a dreamy obsessiveness. He transmutes the Lower East Side settings of those gangster movies to give the genre a richer, more luxuriant visual texture. His wide-screen view of a group of Jewish kids who start with petty crime and move into big-time racketeering is set in 1921, 1933, and 1968, but not in that order. His theme is the betrayal of the immigrants' dream of America, and the story begins and ends in an opium den where Noodles (Robert De Niro) puffs on a pipe while episodes of his life of killings and rapes and massacres drift by and a telephone rings somewhere in the past. This epic is a compendium of kitsch, but it's kitsch aestheticized by someone who loves it and sees it as the poetry of the masses. It isn't just the echoing moments that keep you absorbed—it's the reverberant dreamland settings and Leone's majestic, billowing sense of film movement. With Jennifer Connelly, who's marvellously vivid as the young Deborah; Darlanne Fleugel as the beautiful, streamlined blond Eve; and Tuesday Weld, who brings a gleam of perversity to the role of a nympho moll. Also with Elizabeth McGovern, who's badly miscast as the adult Deborah, and James Woods, Larry Rapp, James Hayden, William Forsythe, Treat Williams, Burt Young, and Joe Pesci. Many writers worked on the screenplay, which is loosely based on the novel "The Hoods," by Harry Grey; the final credits go to to Leone and five Italians, plus Stuart Kaminsky (for additional dialogue).—P.K. (Cinema Village; starting Nov. 22.)

Sea of Love—This romantic thriller, written by Richard Price and directed by Harold Becker, has a simple and rather familiar story: a cop (Al Pacino) investigating a series of murders falls in love with one of the suspects. But the movie isn't entirely predictable; it provides plenty of surprises, odd little riffs that keep us alert. And Pacino is amazing. He's playing a middle-aged, divorced, depressed, semi-alcoholic man who exposes himself to great peril by conducting an affair with a young woman who might be a killer. The actor's face has a saggy, disappointed look now, but there's something hopeful, a wary avidity, in his eyes. In this role, he seems to be startling himself with his own vitality. Barkin is perfectly cast as an ambiguous object of desire; she can look very soft or very, very hard, and the camera doesn't know quite what to make of her. It's a consistently entertaining movie, although Becker's direction has a tendency to flatten the highs in the material. And Price's script, full of sharp dialogue and smart ideas, nevertheless has a few characteristic lapses—most damagingly, a slackening of inspiration toward the end.—T.R. (9/18/89) (Loews Orpheum, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ 59th Street East Cinema, and Chelsea Cinemas; through Nov. 16.)

sex, lies, and videotape—Steven Soderbergh's smooth, handsome first feature generates a fair degree of psychological tension out of next to nothing. It's a triangle drama with a cunning little kink in it. The triangle consists of Ann (Andie MacDowell), a beautiful young Southern woman who has "never really been that much into sex"; her husband, John (Peter Gallagher), a sleazy yuppie lawyer; and her younger sister, Cynthia (Laura San Giacomo), who's sleeping with John. The kink is an old college pal of John's, named Graham (James Spader), a soft-spoken drifter who comes to town and changes everybody's life. Graham has sworn off sex, because, he says, it's the only way for him to stay honest: he's impotent, except when he's watching one of his dozens of home videos—all of them interviews he has conducted with women about sex. He's like a retired gunslinger, a laconic hombre who won't pull his artillery out of its holster because he's seen too much killin' already. This is "Shane" remade as a Southern psychodrama. But there's some real conviction in it—a mixed-up fervor that keeps us watching.—T.R. (8/7/89) (Waverly, and Cinema Studio.)

Young Frankenstein (1974)—A farce-parody of Hollywood's mad-scientist movies. You have to let this Mel Brooks comedy do everything for you, because that's the only way it works. If you accept the silly, zizzy obviousness, it can make you laugh helplessly. Gene Wilder is the old Baron's scientist-grandson, Peter Boyle is the new Monster, and Madeline Kahn is the scientist's fiancée, who becomes the Monster's bride. The picture is in black-and-white, which holds it visually close to the films it takes off from. It's Brooks' most sustained piece of moviemaking—the laughs never let up. The script is by Wilder and Brooks. With Cloris Leachman, Marty Feldman, Teri Garr, Liam Dunn, Richard Haydn, Kenneth Mars, and Gene Hackman, bearded, in a masterly bit as a blind man.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Nov. 21.)

ART NOTES
PART 1 OF 3

WHAT DETERMINES THE PRICE OF AN OLDER AMERICAN PAINTING?

In answering this frequently asked question, we will describe in general terms what a dealer considers when setting price. The task requires an expert eye and years of study, and we offer one caveat to our readers: all rules have exceptions! The mission of our column is to inspire further investigation.

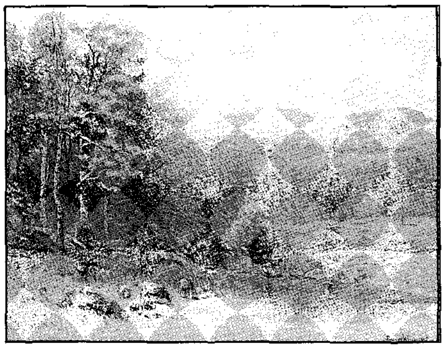
A dealer's first consideration is the popularity of the artist. The work must be thoroughly typical of the artist and be painted during his best period to bring the highest price. Paintings by the great Albert Bierstadt done in the 1850's and 1860's, for example, bring top dollar but those done in his last two decades are considered grossly inferior. The early paintings of Ralph A. Blakelock, painted in the Hudson River School style, bring less on the market than his later more subjective works. But those painted during the last two decades of his life bring nothing: he was in an asylum for the insane and unable to produce quality paintings. When someone tells us that they bought a "bargain" Blakelock, we find that it is either a fake or painted during his asylum years, 1899-1919.

Subject matter is another key determinant in price. European scenes by American painters, for example, generally bring far less than canvases depicting American scenes or subjects. Thomas Moran's scenes of the American West are his most desirable, followed by his Long Island works; least sought are his Venice scenes. Edward Potthast's Swiss mountain scenes are a drag on the market while his highly desirable beach scenes bring six-figure prices.

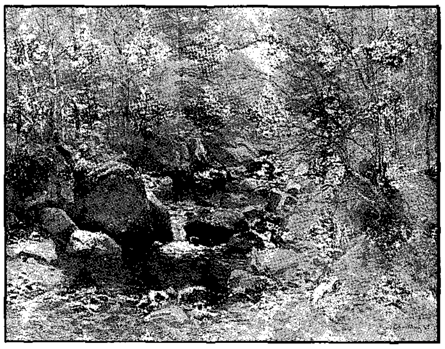
Works from the currently popular Luminist movement (Lane, Church, Heade among the greats) that show calm bodies of water bring much more than those depicting turbulence. As for the Impressionist movement, bright outdoor scenes with identifiable locations bring top prices. John J. Enneking's bright, colorful landscapes fetch far more than the dark twilight scenes for which he was most famous during his lifetime. Public taste plays the important role here, not necessarily the merits of the painting. Thus a contrarian buyer who eschews public taste in subject matter and buys what he or she likes may acquire a high-quality painting at a lesser price.

Part 2: The role of quality, size, and condition.

JOHN JOSEPH ENNEKING (1841-1916)



September in New England, Oil on canvas, 18¼" x 24¼", SLR & Dated 1891, $38,000



A Brook in Spring, Oil on canvas, 18"x 24", SLR & Dated 1888, $10,000

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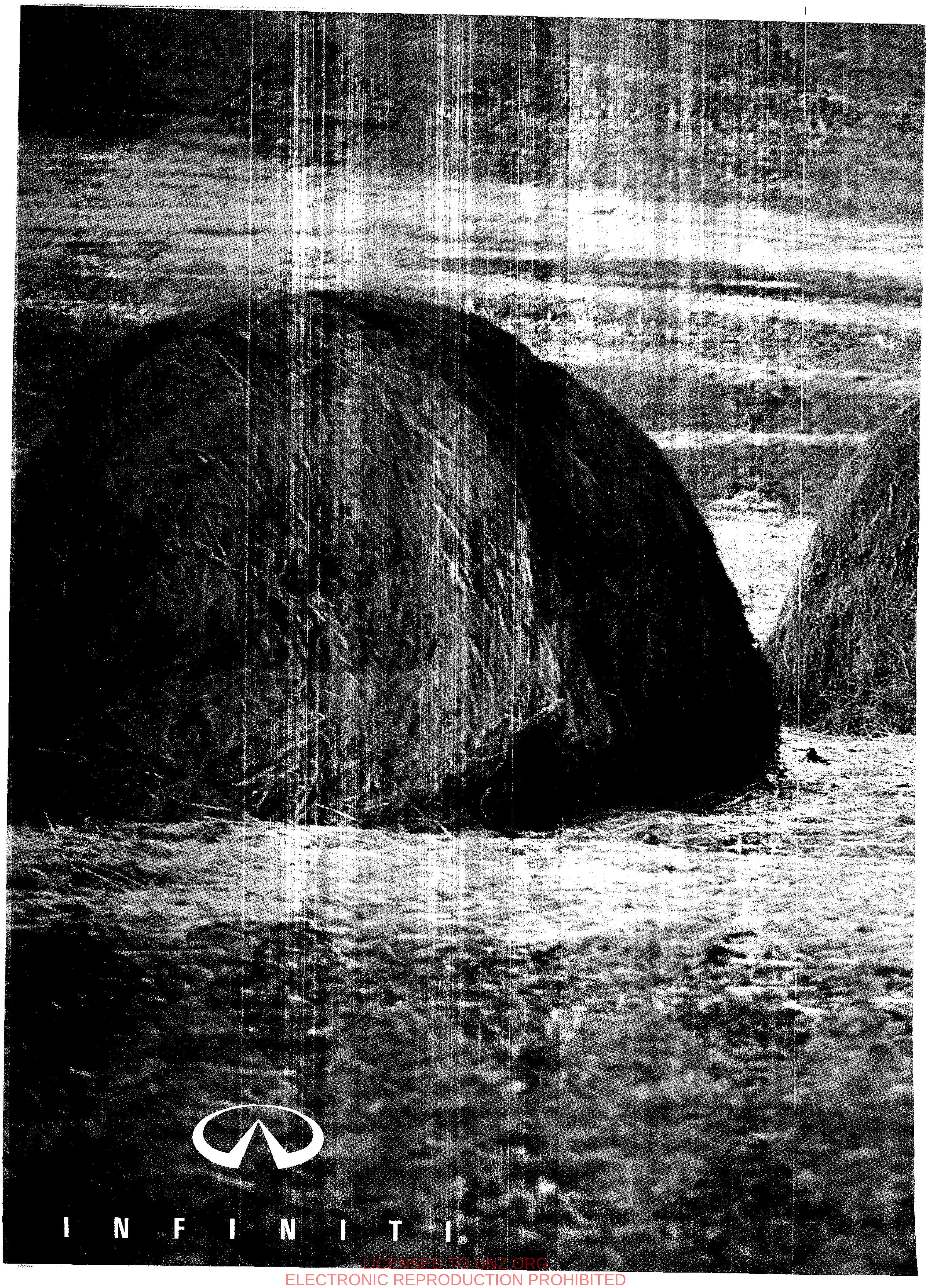
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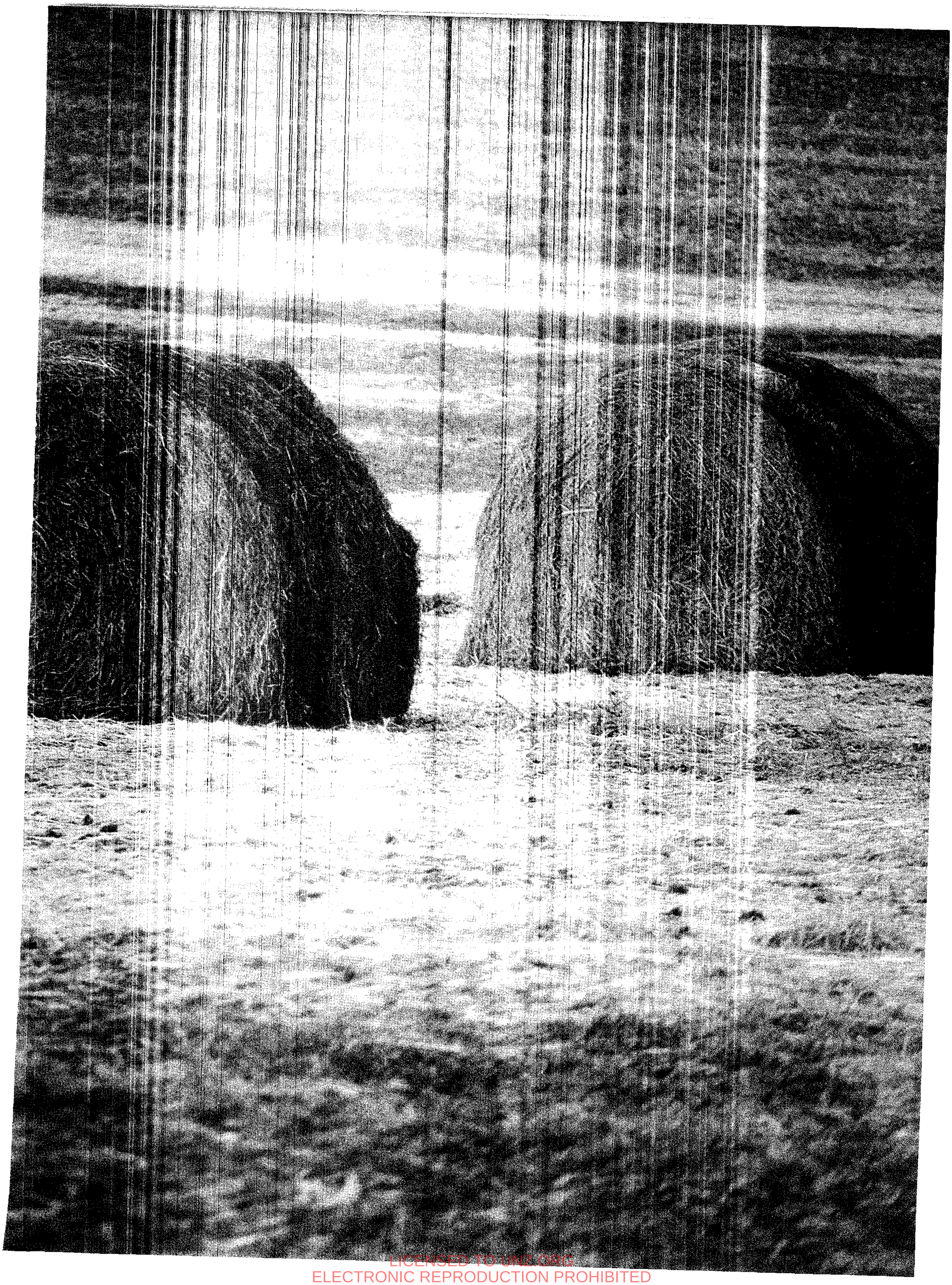

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The reason to dwell on such things is they describe a fundamentally Japanese tradition of respect for beauty and a desire to preserve and prolong that beauty over time.

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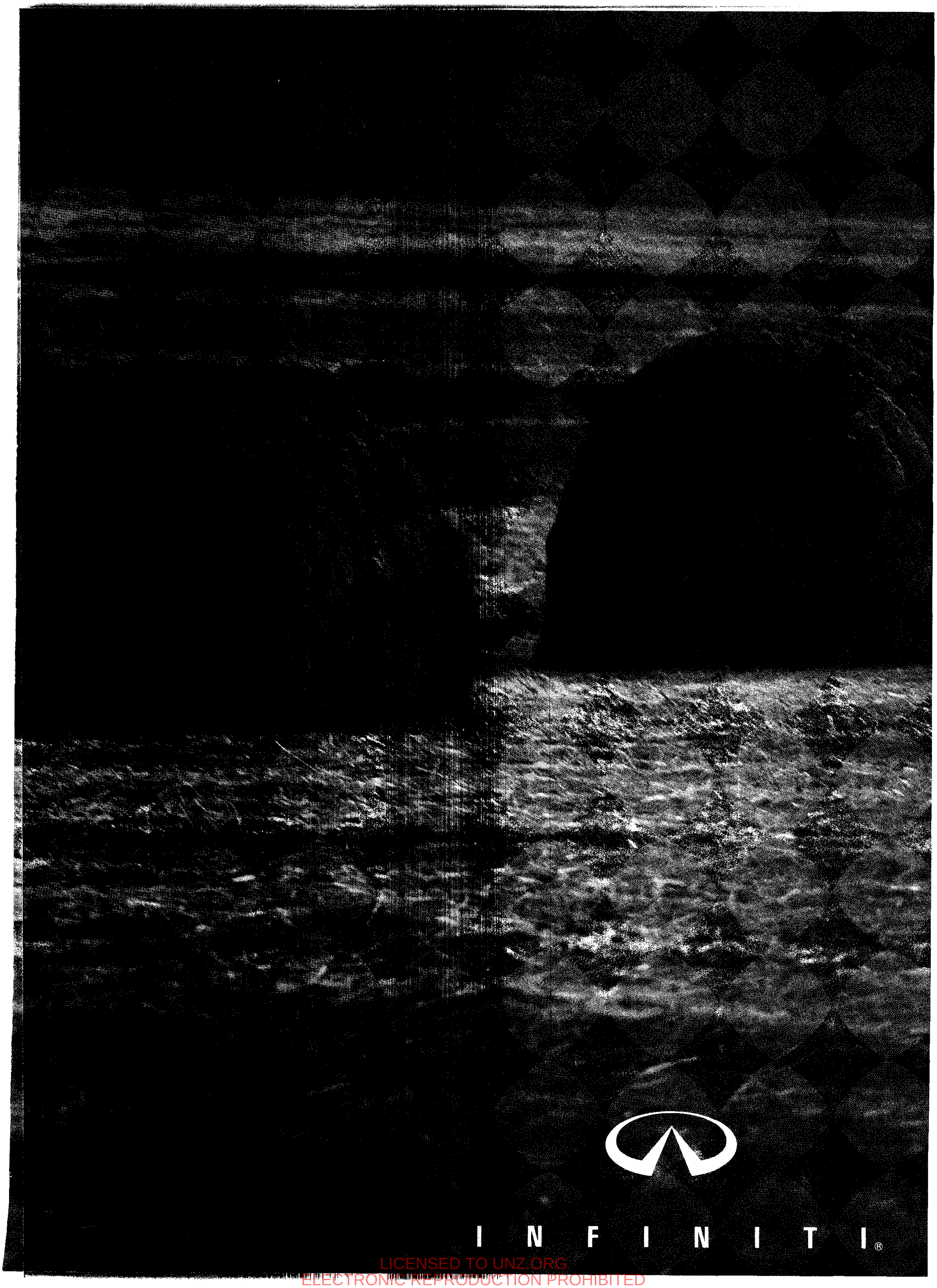
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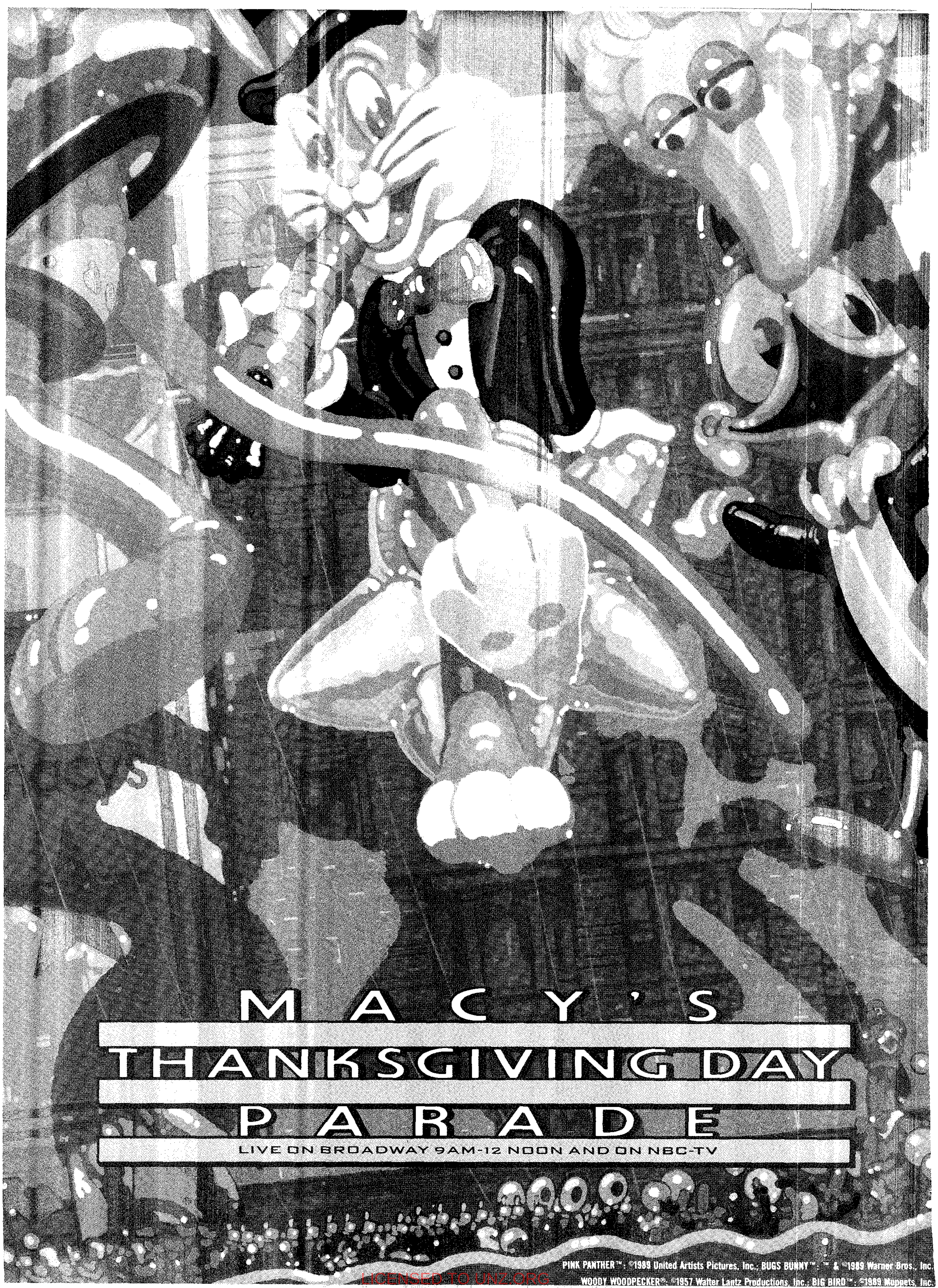
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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

A MANHATTAN woman writes:

Since the Senate passed the bill to prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities last September, I've read quite a few newspaper stories and editorials discussing the bill's merits and debating whether the House should vote for it. I'd like to add some testimony in favor of the bill. Twenty years ago this fall, I had a minor accident that put me on crutches for a couple of months and taught me a little about being disabled in a world designed for the able.

I remember feeling pleased with myself after the orthopedist explained how to walk on crutches, because I grasped right away that the rhythm I needed was the beat of Figaro's aria "Non più andrai," and I'd always believed that Mozart helps, no matter what fix you're in. But minutes later, outside the doctor's office, my assurance faded. My accident occurred before the city began to construct ramps at street corners, and Mozart's rhythm made no allowance for negotiating the curb between me and the taxi.

The curb outside the doctor's office was my introduction to steps and stairs that I had seen but, like Dr. Watson with the stairs at 221B Baker Street, had never observed. That Christmas, I noticed for the first time that the door to every church in my neighborhood was guarded by a flight of steps. Methodist and Baptist steps were just as baroque as Catholic and Episcopalian steps. (They still are.) I accepted an invitation to a Christmas party at a friend's apartment. I'd been there countless times, but until I arrived on crutches I hadn't been aware that after you enter her building's small outer lobby the route to the large inner lobby, where the elevators are, leads up a steep little staircase. Luckily, the doorman helped me. I wouldn't have needed his help if the right kind of imagination had gone into the original design. Still, in fairness to the architects, I have to confess that before my accident I had never realized that I'd been living, working, and going to parties in structures and systems that exaggerate disabilities—that hem in or lock out disabled people.

One afternoon during that holiday season, friends came to our apartment for tea and cookies, whiskey and peanuts. Before they went home, they thoughtfully joined my husband and son in clearing the living room of cups, saucers, plates, and glasses. After the party headed for the kitchen, I saw a glass they'd overlooked on the coffee table, and, forgetting about my crutches, started to rise from the sofa to pick it up. I fell flat on my face. This isn't a tragic story. I wasn't hurt, and nothing got broken; the group returned from the kitchen and helped me up. What I remember most keenly about my moment on the carpet is how much I wanted to be part of the group—to help, and to keep up with the conversation to the very last second. I didn't want to be omitted, deleted, or put in parentheses, even out of kindness.

The number of disabled Americans who could be affected by the bill is estimated at forty-three million, but any catchall label is misleading, because few disabilities are totally disabling. One of the bill's sponsors, Senator Robert Dole, lost the use of his right arm as the result of a war wound, and, of course, one of our most activist Presidents had lost the use of his legs. The bill recognizes the obvious: just because someone can't do one thing doesn't mean he can't do anything.

The bill's opponents argue that it will cost too much. However, Senator Tom Harkin, another of the bill's sponsors, argues that helping the disabled to work will reduce government spending—at present, the government pays fifty-seven billion dollars a year to disabled people who aren't working—without placing an intolerable burden on their employers; in most cases, he says, special accommodations for disabled workers cost less than a hundred dollars. He adds that the bill's public-

accommodations provisions will make it possible for disabled working people to get out and spend the money they earn. I know that Senator Harkin's last point is true: during the months I needed crutches, I found it so difficult to go to the theatre and to movies, museums, concert halls, restaurants, and department stores that I just about stopped consuming.

Wherever I go, I still look around to find the obstacles—or the accommodations—for the disabled. I notice that when a bus driver stops to work the kneeling mechanism for a wheelchair-bound rider the other passengers don't look impatient; they look pleased. I notice, too, that the ramps at the curbs ease the passage of able-bodied people —children on tricycles, grown-ups pushing baby carriages or shopping carts—and not just people in wheelchairs or on crutches. Since September, what with a hurricane, an earthquake, and elections, the disabled have moved off the front pages. On the back pages I find their spokespersons repeating that "the disabled are a minority that anyone can join," and citing statistics that tell us, for example, that people between the ages of thirty-five and sixty are four times as likely to become disabled as to die. I'm not sure the able-bodied public needs to be scared, though. We just need to be reminded.

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Good to the Last Drop

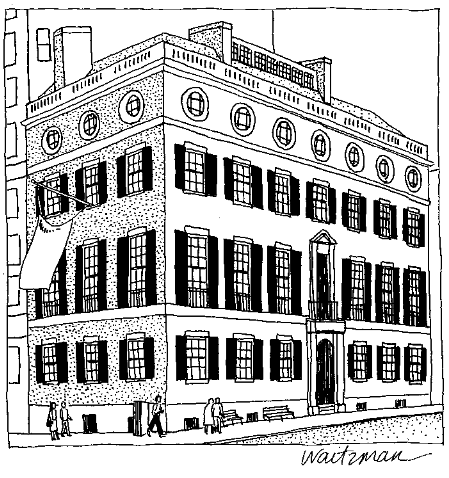
STAND in Elysian Fields Park, in Hoboken, and look through the verdigris-green wrought-iron fence that framed Marlon Brando and Eva Marie Saint in "On the Waterfront": the first thing you'll see is the Empire State Building, across the river. The second thing you'll see, right across the street (Frank Sinatra Drive), is the world's largest coffee factory, Maxwell House Coffee, which celebrated its fiftieth anniversary this month.

The festivities were pretty much an internal affair. There was a retirees' brunch, the annual dinner for longtime employees, and a rare open-house tour of the plant for family members. We're not family, but we wheedled our way in by proclaiming our long-standing admiration for the giant neon Maxwell House sign that faces the Hudson and by promising that we weren't spying for Folger's.

The sign, affixed to the roof, runs the length of the plant. It's a hundred and eighty-two feet long and seventy-five feet high—the largest sign in the harbor—and reads "Maxwell House Coffee." To the left of the "M" is a tilted cup with two drops pendent; at night, the letters are red, the cup is white, and the two red drops flash on and off. It's the kind of sign that inspires the people who can see it from across the river to write to Maxwell House whenever it goes on the blink and ask that it be fixed.

The Maxwell House supervisors were eager to show off their coffee expertise to the hundreds of husbands and wives and children who came to celebrate the anniversary. At each stop, all of us visitors were greeted by a hail of celebratory statistics. After we left the first building, Technical Research (A hundred new products! Almost four hundred patents! Freeze-drying! Agglomeration! Decaffeination!), our guide, George Murphy, hurried us past a beautiful stainless-steel tank truck filled with liquid sugar and past some silvery spent-grounds tanks to the Analytical Labs. There a man in a white coat demonstrated the decaffeination process by doing something we didn't understand to some tall glass columns filled with green coffee beans and bubbling fluid. Another chemist showed us a tube of yellow stuff and said, "You know what coffee aroma looks like? This is it. Five hundred different chemicals." He also showed us some computer printouts that plotted aroma; they looked like seismic readings.

At the Maxwell House History Table, we studied a display of old coffee cans (a Sanka can from 1917 bore the legend "Drink Sanka and Sleep") and learned that in 1907 Teddy Roosevelt is supposed to have stopped at the Maxwell House Hotel, in Nashville, Tennessee (where Maxwell House coffee was first brewed, by Joel Cheek, in 1892), drunk a cup, and said, "My, that's good—that's good to the last drop."



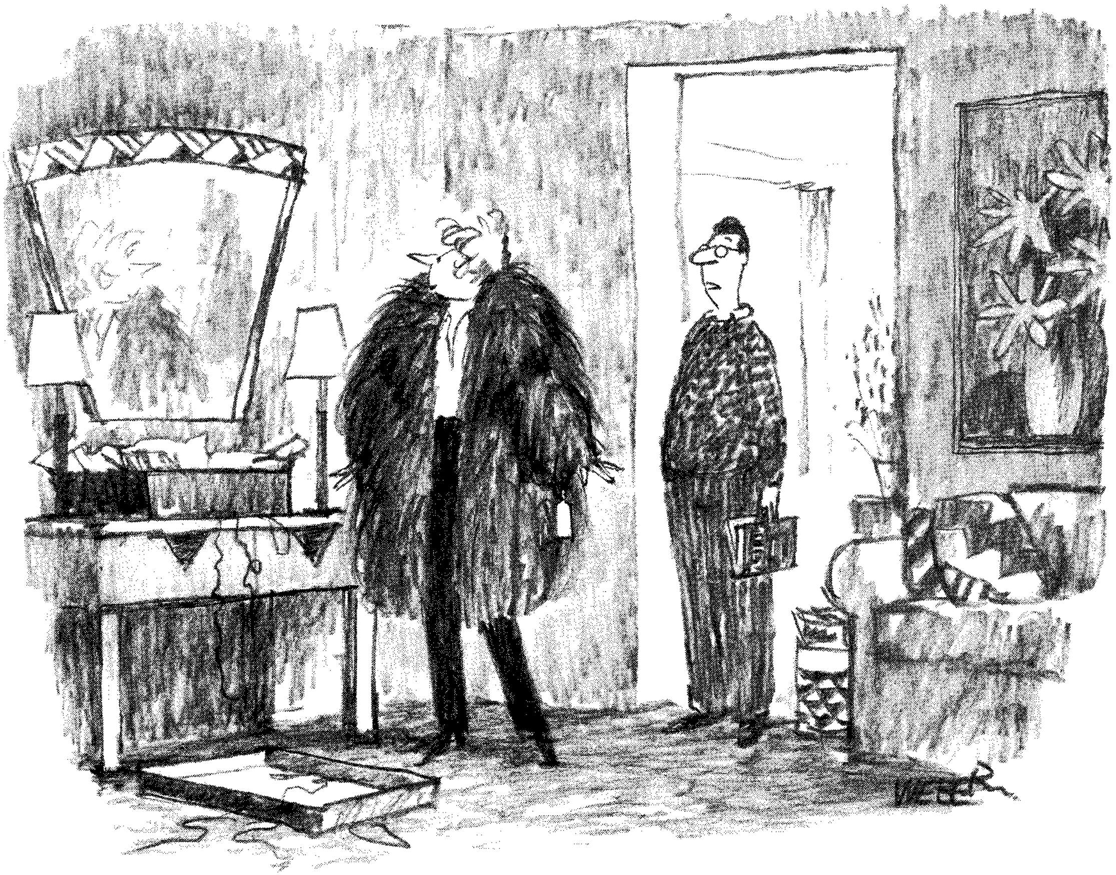
Next came the Tasters' Kitchen, and then it was on to the real factory part. All of a sudden, the noise became deafening and the smell of burned coffee overpowering, and we had to put on little paper Maxwell House hats, so that our hair wouldn't get in the coffee. In the Mixing-Roasting-Grinding department, we were packed into a control room with banks of buttons and switches and lights, and Donald Teator, the supervisor, yelled above the hissing roar, "Welcome to MRG! We live on abbreviation! We at MRG like to feel we are the heartbeat of the plant! We have eighteen Thermalo batch roasters! Six to eleven minutes per roast! Handles ninety thousand pounds over a twenty-four-hour period! We have a high-yield isothermal! Handles one million four hundred thousand pounds over a twenty-four-hour period! We've got a lotta firepower! We've got two hundred and forty thousand pounds of beans over our heads! We've got total control of the green!" He meant the green coffee bean, which, Mr. Murphy said, shaking his head, "has got no flavor, no aroma—no nothing."

We got to see exactly what happens to the green when we were taken out on the floor of MRG. This is the fifth level of the plant, facing the river, and has one of the best views in Hoboken, but the roasters—great, hulking, evil-looking black iron lungs that rotate as they roast their "charge" of beans at some four hundred degrees—were more riveting. They looked as though they could heat the whole town if they wanted to. After a hot few minutes, the beans are cooled in a cooling car; are blown around in "stoners," which allow any rocks to fall to the bottom; are ground on the grinding floor ("Last stop for the whole bean!"); and then are danced up and down in vibrating machines, which separate the shells from the coffee. Aromas, in the form of vapor, are collected in the aroma-collecting area and frozen with liquid nitrogen (the aroma frost looks like pale-green dry ice) for reintroduction into instant-coffee products that don't smell like much on their own.

Then there's the canning floor, the second, where Bob (The Can Man) Kunkle checked to see if our hair restraints were in place and then led us all out to see the shiny blue (regular) and green (decaf) cans whizzing by overhead—a hundred and ninety a minute—through chutes and on slides and conveyor belts that look like roller coasters for cans. Bob shouted over the din, "After all these years, it still amazes me! Who drinks it all?"

We were wondering the same thing. The Hoboken plant is just one of four Maxwell House coffee plants in the country, and almost all its coffee is consumed in the Northeast. We were also wondering if the caffeine content of the coffee-saturated air that floats out across Elysian Fields has any effect on the local population, and if it might account for the bursts of hyperactivity we sometimes see in Hoboken: the parades and clouds of balloons that precede any bid for office, no matter how lowly; the dozens of pairs of tennis shoes slung over telephone wires all over town; the endless sweeping of sidewalks by suspicious-looking women with old brooms.

At the end of the tour, we were served doughnuts and coffee, and shown a brief film that mentions something that seemed far away from the bucket elevators and airveyors and automatic palletizers (Eight hundred cases per hour!) we'd been looking at. In the countries of Africa and South America where coffee grows, each tree just sits in the ground, growing, for five years, twenty-four hours a day, before it bears coffee "cherries" worth picking. There are no machines there. The storage silos in Hoboken can hold eighteen million pounds of beans, and every last one of those beans is picked by hand.



"Since when do you wear animals?"

• •

Sans Doute

TWO postcards recently came in the mail. One said, "So far I've missed Pavarotti in Modena," and the other said, "I can't get to Dubrovnik." They were from Janet. When she returned from the trip, we went to see her.

"The first thing I did when I got home was take a hot bath and go to bed," Janet said. "The next day, I went to the office to pick up my check, which wasn't there. So I said, 'Hey, where's my check?' This woman I call Betty (her name is Ruth) said, 'You've retired.' I said 'When?' 'While you were away,' she said. I said, 'I was just on vacation,' and I started laughing. Betty said, 'This is no laughing matter. If they put the papers through, you're retired.' My solution was to tell them to tear up the papers, but she said they're not allowed to do that. I was thinking of becoming a consultant, but by the time I came up with that solution they'd unretired me. They told me a check was coming in the mail with a lump sum. They said, 'Don't cash the check. If you cash it, you're retired.' If the lump sum's big enough, I'm going to cash it."

We asked about the trip.

"Oh, yes," she said. "It was supposed to be a vacation, but it turned out to be a very tiring trip. I was loaded down with luggage. I couldn't move. You meet a lot of people that way. If they were women, I would tell them, 'Better get married between twenty-five and twenty-nine and three-quarters, because when you hit thirty you start getting panicky.' If they were men, I asked them to help me with my bags. When you have less time ahead of you than behind you, you're supposed to dispense pearls of wisdom to anybody who'll listen. The other thing is, you don't care so much about possessions. I mean, I mind having my four-hundred-dollar camera swiped, but I would have minded more ten years ago. I saw my camera going up in an elevator in the hands of a young couple. I said 'Hold the door,' but they purposely let it close. Instead of film I bought sunglasses from a Greek Communist in the hotel lobby. Did I tell you about the terrible night on the train going from Paris to Rome?"

We said no.

"The trip started in Amsterdam," Janet said, "and ended in Rome with me losing my passport the night before I was supposed to leave for New York. I ran over to the Embassy to get a new one. I did a Greek dance. Then I showed them all my pictures of celebrities. They gave me a passport within the hour, and said, 'Don't lose this one.' I said 'All right,' and lost it two hours later at the airport in Amsterdam. The plane was leaving in four minutes. I had decided to get on board without a passport when a woman in uniform said 'Are you Janet?' and handed me my passport."

We asked about the rest of the trip.

Janet said, "I was in Paris. Couldn't lift my suitcase. I had left my European address book in New York, so I couldn't find anyone. On the Métro, someone very tall—I figured he was American—said, 'Wait a second, I know you. I saw you on Channel 13 two weeks ago. You're a crazy nut.' I didn't come to Europe to hear that. Four hours later, I dragged my suitcase out of the Deux Magots into the pouring rain. I realized I'd got very old on this trip. A very young man named Sebastian Lopez saved my life by driving me out to the Gare de Lyon, which must be the farthest *gare* you can get to. He's coming to stay here at my house. Here's the terrible part."

We braced ourself.

"I had got myself something called a Eurailpass, which is the kind of thing parents give their kids when they graduate from college. I tried getting a *wagon-lit*, which is a bed on the train, but they were all reserved. I asked the conductor if he was French or Italian. He said 'Italian,' so I said 'I'm a friend of Luciano Pavarotti.' He said, 'Congratulations, I still don't have a *wagon-lit*.' Another conductor said he had a *couchette*—a board you lie on in your clothes—in a compartment with five other people. Two horrible Italian youths were in the toptiers, a lady from Nigeria with a nine-month-old baby was on one of the middle shelves, and two thieves who were taken away in the middle of the night in handcuffs were on the bottom. Luckily, I had taken a sleeping pill and put all my money in my sock. In Rome, I spent the night at my friend Nunzia's, on a mattress made entirely of lumps. It was a challenge. I told you about the French guy, didn't I?"

We didn't think so.

She told us about the French guy. The punch line was "*Sans doute.*"

We chuckled.

"I spent my entire trip looking for a hot bath and a bed," Janet said. "I went to Mykonos looking for Nicolo. It turned out everyone there is called Nicolo, so I never found mine. I did meet a honeymoon couple named Mary and Joseph, who found me a hotel. I've been to Mykonos three times in my life and never gone to the beach. I didn't even go to the nude beach. Or shop. I just lugged a suitcase around. Remind me to tell you about the Iranian weight lifter."

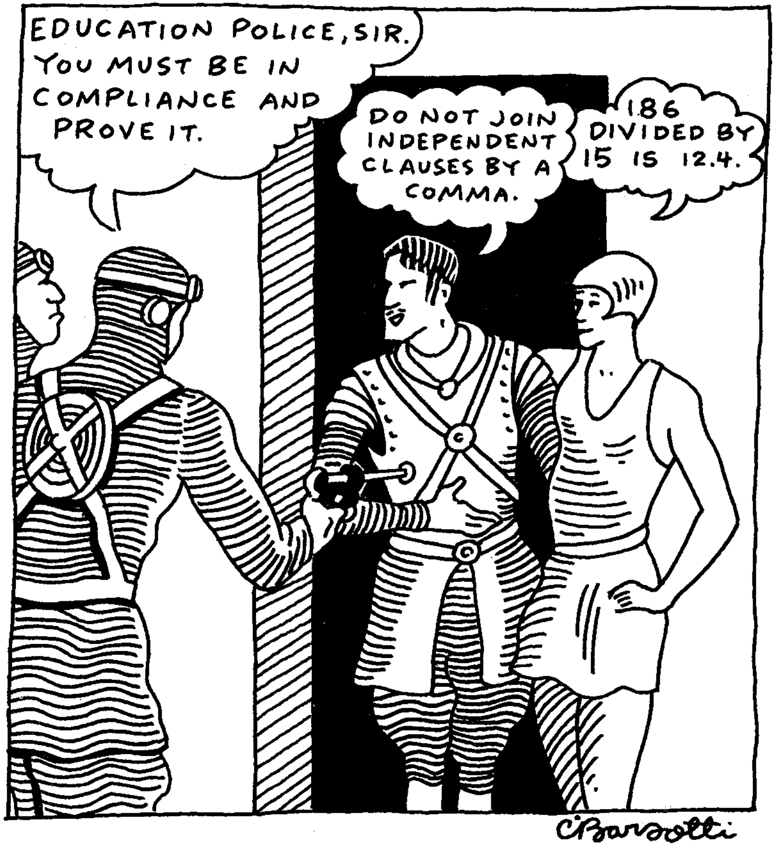
We said we would.

"In Athens, I stayed two nights at the Grande Bretagne," Janet said. "Everybody at the Grande Bretagne is crazy about me. Finally, I moved over to Jules Dassin's, because I couldn't afford the hotel anymore. Because of my exhausted frame of mind, Jules Dassin felt so sorry for me that he bought me a plane ticket from Athens back to Rome, where I had two more nights of lumps. From Rome I went to Modena, where Pavarotti was born, but he wasn't there at the moment. He had escaped to the beach. But when I spoke to him on the telephone he told me what to order at Fini's. 'You must eat *fritto misto*,' he said."

Our attention wandered. Janet said something about a Greek cook, a handsome silver-haired man from Portugal, an unprintable story, and a man who claimed to be a butler with two completely different addresses.

"Two guys from Lebanon," she was saying when we recollected ourself, and then "Everywhere I went, I met peace-loving Germans. In Bologna, I spent a day and a half with a forty-year-old German guy with a beard who said, 'I don't want to do nothing.' And that's what we did—just walked around in the heart of ancient Bologna. Every half hour, one of us would say, 'I think we should sit down and have a coffee.' We took in the beauties of the city. He was very spiritual, and I tried to be. We found a little golf handkerchief that I wanted for my friend Joe, but the store was closed. He

THE WAR AGAINST IGNORANCE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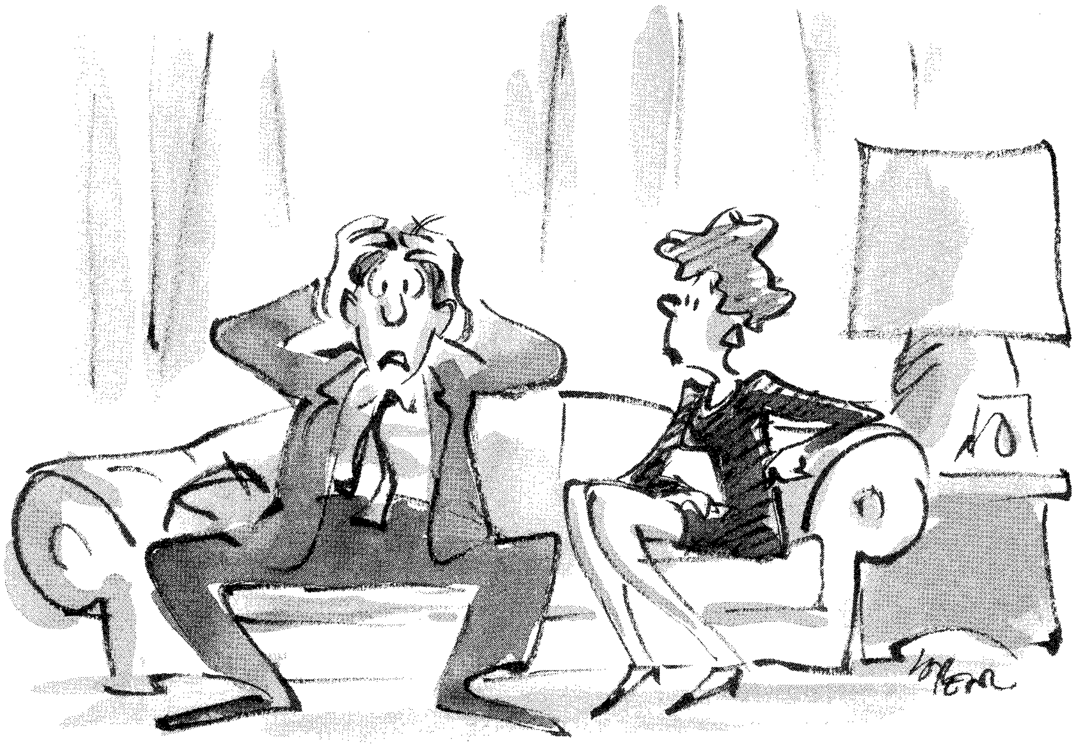
186 DIVIDED BY 15 IS 12.4.
CBarsotti

bought it for me as a gift and sent it to me. He's coming to stay here. Everybody's coming to stay here."

Janet began to pore over her collection of business cards. "I don't know who these people are," she said. "I should have made little notes on the back, the way Hamilton Fish III does. Did I mention that I didn't get to Dubrovnik?"

We said yes.



"Forgive me, Doris, but some computer hacker from Roslyn, Long Island, has just gained access to my feelings."

• •

Pilgrim

ONE thing that Savath Bon just can't get into is cranberry sauce slapped down next to turkey. "Why don't you have cranberries raw with a little sugar and pepper, like me?" he asked us one day while he was taking a break from his job in the cranberry fields of Burlington County, the cranberry capital of New Jersey. He sums his work up this way: "It's like farming paddy fields at home in Cambodia, only cranberries need less water, and they're funnier than rice, because they float and bounce."

Until Bon was eight years old, he lived in Battambang, a Cambodian province roughly the size of New Jersey, with his parents and five brothers. In 1977, his father, who was a soldier for Prince Norodom Sihanouk, was taken by the Khmer Rouge from their house, blindfolded and with his hands tied behind his back. Bon remembers being too afraid to cry, because, he told us, "they would have shot me for the smallest noise." Later that year, the Khmer Rouge drafted him. "They made me a sergeant and taught me to fight and shoot and drive tanks," he said. "I didn't like it. I didn't want to kill. And they starved me. Then the Vietnamese came, and I escaped. I was ten years old, and I walked for two months, without shoes, to Thailand. All along the way, I prayed. When I arrived, my feet were bleeding. The Americans gave me water, rice, fish, and shoes, and taught me English with a chalkboard. For seven years, I lived in camps, building bamboo huts and studying."

Three years ago, after spending months first in the Philippines and then in San Diego, Bon and what was left of his family—five of them, who had also fled to Thailand (his father was still missing, and one brother had died)—settled in Philadelphia. When he isn't harvesting cranberries, he helps with the blueberry crops or assists a landscape gardener. But work is scarce, especially in winter. So he watches a lot of TV, sleeps, and, on flush days, visits Atlantic City.

Probably the best way to understand Bon's present job is to head out to the Pine Barrens; say hello to his boss, Charles Thompson, who is the largest independent cranberry grower in the state; pull on rubber waders; and take a walk in the bog. In southern New Jersey, bog isn't an unpleasant concept. Without a bog, Bon and his colleagues (eight Cambodians and a handful of pineys) couldn't perform "wet picking," a process in which they (1) flood the bog, (2) unleash a picker—it looks like a tractor eating a barbed-wire fence—which frees the cranberries to float to the surface, (3) plunge in and corral the berries into a ring with long hemlock boards, (4) load a truck by prodding the berries onto a conveyor belt. The truck hauls the berries inside a barn to be blow-dried and then bounced—to sort the ripe from the rotten. About this time, somebody usually pours a pan of water down somebody else's waders.

Every October, the nearby village of Chatsworth galvanizes around a cranberry festival, which features cranberry-containing things to buy, like muffins, and contests—for the biggest berry, the most creative recipe (this year, it was a tie between Cran-Blueberry Jam and Feather-Light Angel Food Fluff), and the house most gracefully decorated in a cranberry motif. All proceeds go toward historic preservation in the area. Nobody in those parts can rival Bon in persuading snakes not to lay into the berries before the harvest (he leaves pumpkins out to distract them) or in the science of winging a berry at a co-worker. "If I like him, I play with him," he told us, and he added, "Someday I'd like to have my own farm."

RAIN

THE missing boy—twelve, gone now forty hours—left the gate open in the low fence separating back yard from forest. It swings wide with the wind, rapping against old fence boards and then the opposing post, striking its latch but not catching, time and again, audible to the nearest searchers. The flat clack of wood, the hollow clank of metal are desolate sounds that make them fear the worst.

Karen Stupka and her friend Orla Figes search together—the sheriff insisted on pairs—hooded in identical yellow slickers issued by the fire department, carrying flashlights from home, rain streaking down their coats, trickling across their faces.

"They said to be systematic," Karen calls to Orla, taking her by the slicker's rubber sleeve, yelling into her friend's hood. They stop before a wall of kudzu, raindrops dribbling off the leaves. The relentless fall through the dense vines makes a sound like the rush of surf. "I don't see how we can be systematic," Karen says. The forest—black, dense, and ancient—covers a thousand Georgia acres.

"Up and back," Orla suggests. "We stick together, right? Up and back as long as we can take it." Orla has a Slavic seriousness to her face, and thick, dark brows that converge when she is speaking earnestly.

The forest smells of rain, rotting wood, and something else—fear, Karen decides. She says, "We can duck under the vines through there." She shines her light on an opening in the long fall of kudzu, threads of water sparkling in the beam. She leads, Orla follows. They live across the street from one another, two blocks from the tragic home, the swinging gate. It has rained five of the past six days, the only exception the afternoon the boy disappeared—a kid interested in mushrooms. His mother speculates that he entered the woods to add to his collection, and there is the fear that he may have eaten a poison toadstool and is now lying among sodden leaves, clutching his stomach, rain pelting his face.

Karen and Orla penetrate the forest a mile away from the boy's house, an unlikely area assigned to them by the sheriff, who organized the volunteers according to his sense of their value. The likeliest places he gave to off-duty policemen and firemen, teaming them with family members, in whom he had no confidence. Lawrence, Karen's husband, is one of the men at the heart of the search. He is not a fireman, policeman, or relative, but he is a big man, young and imposing. His partner is the sixteen-year-old brother of the missing boy.

The sheriff was dismissing Karen and Orla by sending them so far away. Karen understands this but has said nothing about it, even to Orla, forgiving him out of compassion and a sense of the larger issue of the missing boy, and, too, out of relief, as the assignment was a partial release from awful responsibility.

Karen and Orla sweep their lights in unison—rough bark, green leaves shimmering with moisture, the yellow and brown of decay, plots of moss, families of mushrooms, a graying branch sticking out of the earth like a cross. Wind flashes through the high limbs, treetops bow, leaves fall like rain, rain falls like darkness, and darkness falls like snow, covering everything.

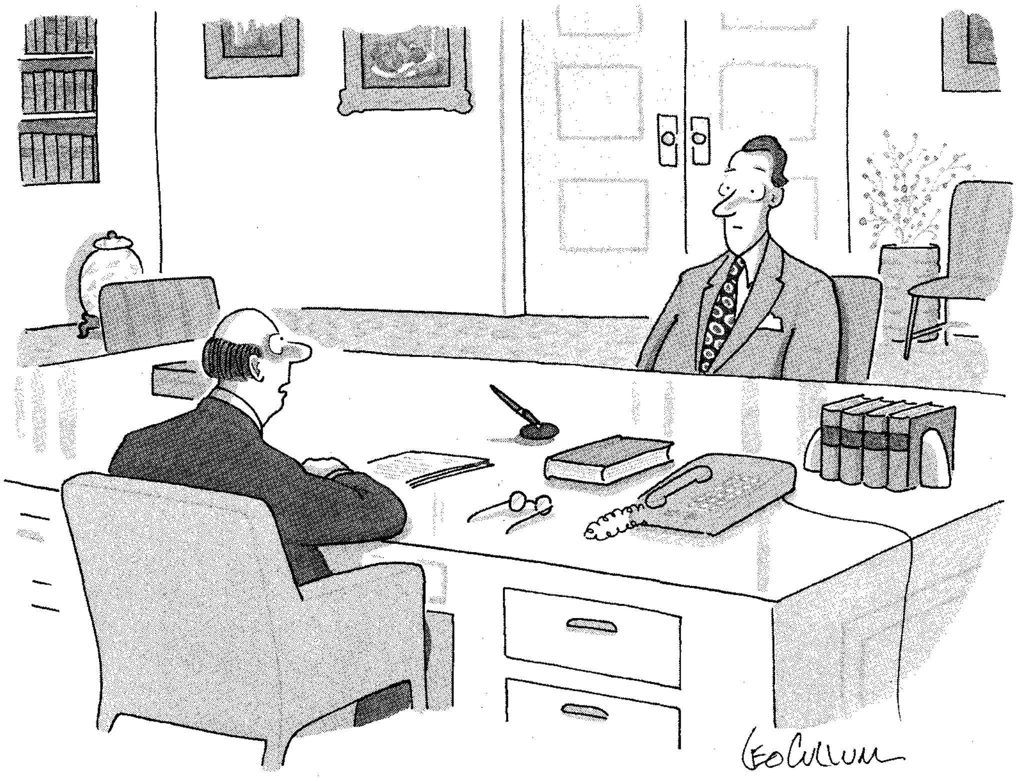
"The rain should keep the spiders down," Karen says. She and Orla share a fear of spiders, which Orla claims is as endemic to women as the fear of snakes is to men.

"I hadn't even thought of spiders," Orla says. "How far should we go before turning back?"

"Farther," Karen says. She is thirty-four, a year younger than Orla and six years older than her husband. She did not marry Lawrence for love, but in the two years they have been together she has come to love him. He is a kind man, not particularly bright, not remarkably foolish—"limited" is how Orla describes him. Now he and Karen are hoping to have children. Orla, twice divorced, has told Karen she will likely spend the remainder of her life alone.

They come to a ravine. The sides are steep and grassy, and at the bottom a shallow stream of water flows slowly through brambles and around large stones. The curtain of rain obscures the opposite bank, sending their beams of light back at them.

"We could turn around here," Karen says, "but this is the sort



"My fees are quite high, and yet you say you have little money. I think I'm seeing a conflict of interest here."

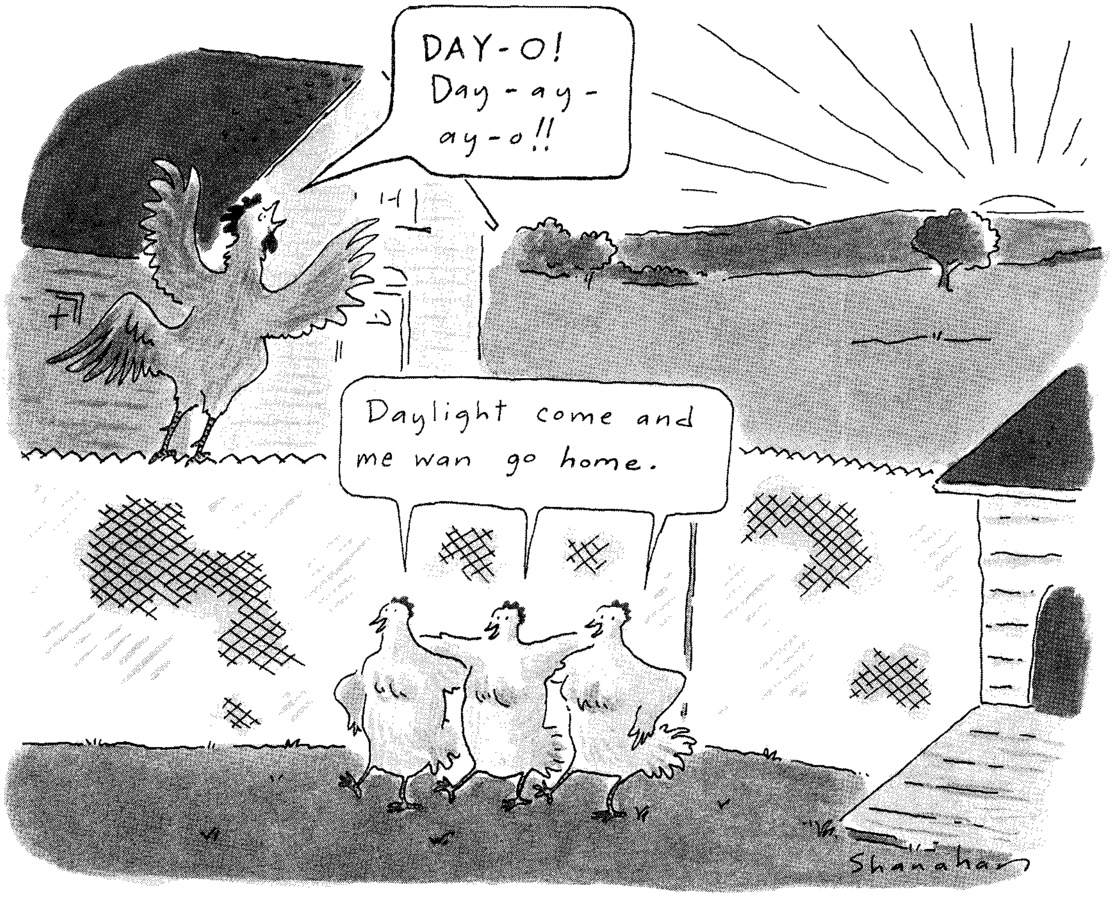
of place a boy might go."

"You think he could be trapped in this ditch?" Orla steps closer, directing her light at the muddy water. "Down, then?"

Karen shrugs. They hold hands and tentatively step sideways down the bank, their feet sliding in the black mud. Finally, they tumble together into the stream. Orla lands face first, but quickly rises, spitting. "I'm not hurt," she announces.

Karen says, "I've lost my shoe."

They stand up together, holding hands again. The water comes to just below the knees of their jeans and pushes them forward, and they go along slowly, casting their lights about. Karen limps slightly, one foot bare. Her light falters, but she twists the plastic lid and the beam is again steady.


DAY-O! Day-ay-ay-o!!
Daylight come and me wan go home.
Shanahan

The water deepens, and when Orla suggests they turn back, Karen agrees, pointing again with the light to the opposite bank. Orla nods—they will cover the other side on their way back.

Their first attempt to scale the bank tells them it is impossible—too steep, too slick. They fall forward and slide back into the bottom water.

"Maybe it won't be so steep later on," Karen suggests. Neither wants to retrace their steps: a child is missing.

The ravine grows narrower, the stream deeper, the rain does not slacken. A cold wind punishes the overhanging limbs, pushing against their faces drops of water that sting like pebbles. Orla says something Karen cannot make out. They turn their backs to the wind momentarily, and Orla's warm breath enters Karen's hood. "If the boy's been in this ditch all this time . . . " She shakes her head sadly, her dark hair falling in wet slashes across her forehead and cheeks.

The water has risen now above their knees. Twice Karen falls to a crouch, stumbling over hidden rocks, bruising her bare foot. Orla grabs her elbow each time. The wind rises again—a wall, halting them, making them raise their arms, turn their heads. They hold to one another until it passes.

Orla says, "I've peed my pants." She is laughing, her big mouth opened to the rain. "I didn't see any reason to hold it."

Karen laughs, too. "We may not get out of here until we can swim out."

This doubles Orla over with laughter, wet strands of hair falling free of the hood and lashing the water. "You do it," she says, rising, taking Karen's raincoat by the shoulder. "Pee."

Karen shakes her head. "Impossible."

They stumble forward a few more yards. A gray, leafless tree trails down the bank. It does not give when Karen yanks at the limbs. "You first," she yells to Orla, who obeys. She clutches at the branches and pulls herself from the stream and then up the bank, where Karen soon joins her, weary, muddy, and relieved.

On their knees they rest on the mucky ground. The sky goes white and thunder quickly follows. Karen looks down into the ravine's flow. "We could have been electrocuted," she says. "We could have died down there."

Orla smiles, revealing her long teeth and pink gums. "We could die up here, too." Her chin trembles to restrain laughter.

Karen also feels the urge to laugh, but the flashlight she grips fiercely reminds her of why they are in the forest. "The boy," she says, and Orla nods, sombre again. They get up slowly and begin to work their way back through the forest.

LATER that night, wrapped in towels on Karen's living-room floor, they drink brandy and wait for Lawrence to return. Orla's towel is purple and emphasizes her paleness, as her bare shoulders emphasize the length of her arms. A gawky woman, she looks all the more so clothed only in a towel. One of her large, bony hands rakes her hair, which, dripping wet, looks better, Karen believes, than when it is dry and styled. Orla wears her hair in a manner Karen finds aggressively unattractive

FISSION

The real electric lights light upon the full-sized
screen
on which the greater-than-life-size girl appears,
almost nude on the lawn—the sprinklers on—
voice-over her mother calling her name out—loud—
camera angle giving her lowered lids their full
expanse—a desert—as they rise

out of the shabby annihilation,
out of the possibility of never-having-been-seen,
and rise,
till the glance is let loose into the auditorium,
and the man who has just stopped in his tracks
looks down
for the first

time. Tick tock. It's the birth of the mercantile
dream (he looks down). It's the birth of
the dream called
new world (looks down). She lies there. A corridor of light filled with dust
flows down from the booth to the screen.
Everyone in here wants to be taken off

somebody's list, wants to be placed on
somebody else's list.
Tick. It is 1963. The idea of history is being
outmaneuvered.
So that as the houselights come on—midscene—
not quite killing the picture which keeps flowing beneath,

a man comes running down the aisle
asking for our attention—
Ladies and Gentlemen.
I watch the houselights lap against the other light—the tunnel
of image-making dots licking the white sheet awake—
a man, a girl, her desperate mother—daisies growing in the corner—

I watch the light from our real place
suck the arm of screen-building light into itself
until the gesture of the magic forearm frays,
and the story up there grays, pales—them almost lepers now, saints, such
white on their flesh in
patches—her thighs like receipts slapped down on a slim silver tray,
her eyes as she lowers the heart-shaped shades,
as the glance glides over what used to be the open,
the free,
as the glance moves, pianissimo, over the glint of day,
over the sprinkler, the mother's voice shrieking like a grappling
hook,
the grass blades aflame with being-seen, here on the out-

skirts. . . . You can almost hear the click at the heart of the silence
where the turnstile shuts and he's *in*—our hero—
the moment spoked,
our gaze on her fifteen-foot eyes,
the man hoarse now as he waves his arms,
as he screams to the booth to cut it, cut the sound,
and the sound is cut,
and her sun-barred shoulders are left to turn

soundless as they accompany
her neck, her face, the
looking up.
Now the theatre's skylight is opened and noon slides in.
I watch as it overpowers the electric lights,
whiting the story out one layer further

till it's just a smoldering of whites
where she sits up, and her stretch of flesh
is just a roiling up of graynesses,
vague stutterings of
light with motion in them, bits of moving zeros

in the infinite virtuality of light,
some *likeness* in it but not particulate,
a grave of possible shapes called *likeness*—see it?—something
scrawling up there that could be skin or daylight or even
the expressway now that he's gotten her to leave with him—
(it happened rather fast) (do you recall)—

• •

—an old-fashioned puff and curl that belongs on a country-and-Western singer. Wet, her hair at least looks as if it has potential, which makes Karen think of her husband, how he looks best unshaven but without a beard—that in-between stage that raises possibilities.

Orla says, "We should have been terrified in that ravine. Why were we so brave?"

Karen shakes her head to express her wonder.

"Did you find any ticks?" Orla asks, fingering her skull. "I was expecting to find ticks in my hair."

"No ticks, no spiders," Karen says.

To which Orla adds sadly, "No boy."

When Lawrence finally returns, exhausted, his face smeared with mud, he tells them the boy has been found—alive—his leg broken from a fall. He had climbed a tree hoping to see over the forest and determine the way home. The fall could have killed him, but he survived it.

Lawrence removes his shirt as he finishes the story, and it occurs to Karen that they could all three go to bed. Rather than send Orla across the street to her empty house, they could go into the next room and climb into the wide bed. She knows this will not happen. Lawrence sits on the floor to take off his boots. He reminds them that he has been searching with the

the man up front screaming the President's been shot,
waving
his hat, slamming one hand flat
over the open
to somehow get
our attention,

in Dallas, behind him the scorcher—whites, grays,
laying themselves across his face—
him like a beggar in front of us, holding his hat—
I don't recall what I did,
I don't recall what the right thing to do would be,
I wanted someone to love. . . .

There is a way she lay down on that lawn
to begin with,
in the heart of the sprinklers,
before the mother's call,
before the man's shadow laid itself down,

there is a way to not yet be wanted,

there is a way to lie there at twenty-four frames
per second—no faster—
not at the speed of plot,
not at the speed of desire—

the road out—expressway—hotels—motels—
no telling what we'll have to see next,
no telling what all we'll have to want next
(right past the stunned rows of houses), no telling
what on earth we'll have to marry marry marry. . . .

Where the three lights merged:
where the image licked my small body from the
front, the story playing

all over my face my
forwardness,
where the electric lights took up the back and sides,
the unwavering houselights,
seasonless,

where the long thin arm of day came in from
the top
to touch my head
reaching down along my staring face—
where they flared up around my body unable to
merge into each other
over my likeness,
slamming down one side of me, unquenchable—here
static
there flaming—
sifting grays into other grays—
mixing the split second into the long haul—
flanking me—undressing something there where my
body is
though not my body—
where they play on the field of my willingness,

where they kiss and brood, filtering each other to
no avail,
all over my solo
appearance,
bits smoldering under the shadows I make—
and aimlessly—what we call *free*—there

the immobilism sets in,
the being-in-place more alive than the being,
my father sobbing beside me, the man on the stage
screaming, the woman behind us starting to
pray,
the immobilism, the being-in-place more alive than

the being,
the squad car now faintly visible on the screen
starting the chase up,
all over my countenance,
the velvet armrest at my fingers, the dollar bill

in my hand,
choice the thing that wrecks the sensuous here the
glorious here—
that wrecks the beauty,
choice the move that rips the wrappings of light, the
ever-tighter wrappings

of the layers of the
real: what is, what also is, what might be that is,
what could have been that is, what
might have been that is, what I say that is,
what the words say that is,
what you imagine the words say that is—Don't
move, don't

wreck the shroud, don't move—

—Jorie Graham

• •

missing boy's sixteen-year-old brother. "He kept talking the whole time about the trouble the kid would be in once we found him. What a jerk."

Orla adjusts her towel, willing to think of modesty now that she knows the boy is all right. She says, "Some people express their fears that way. Don't be too harsh."

Lawrence peels off his filthy socks. "I suppose you're right. I think I wanted to dislike him." He tosses the socks on top of his shirt. "I know it's unfair—anybody's boy could get lost in the woods—but I kept thinking they must be a screwed-up family, you know? I kept wanting to blame them." He shook his head once, as if to knock the idea out of himself. "How was it down where you were?"

"Rough," Orla says.

"We wound up in a ravine and couldn't get out for a long while," Karen tells him. "I remember thinking we were going to find the boy down there and we'd all be stuck together." This isn't true, she realizes as she says it. It is something like the truth but not quite it.

"I'm going to take a shower," Lawrence says. "Wait up for me. I'm tired but not sleepy. I want to talk."

When he is gone, Orla asks to borrow clothes, then retracts the request. "If I can hike through that forest, I can certainly run across the street in a towel. Come with me."

"More adventure," Karen says.

They share an umbrella, as the rain has not let up, and walk across the asphalt and through the brown water bordering the sidewalk. Inside, they rub their bare feet on Orla's throw rug, which makes them laugh again.

"We're acting like hysterics," Orla says.

Karen waits in the living room while Orla steps into her bedroom to dress. Through the front window she sees the matching window in her house, lit, the curtains open. It is the dead of night but identical windows all along the street are lit; the searchers are unable to sleep.

"Why do you think we were so brave?" Orla calls from the bedroom.

Karen shakes her head, as if Orla could see. Lawrence has just appeared in the window across the way, a white towel around his waist. He is probably disappointed that Orla is gone, Karen thinks. Lawrence does not find Orla attractive, but he likes her to appreciate him. He steps to the window and looks out for several seconds before he spots Karen looking back at him.

Karen parts her towel for an instant. He applauds, and when she gestures for it, he opens his towel, too.

"Why do you think we were so brave?" Orla calls again, entering the room. She wears brown shorts and a sleeveless muslin blouse.

It could happen, Karen thinks. The three of them in one bed. Orla would go for it, she believes, and Lawrence certainly wouldn't object. She understands that it is her decision, and she decides against it. "We had to be brave," she tells Orla. "We didn't have a choice."

"Yes, we did," Orla insists. "We could have sat on our bottoms and cried until they sent a search party after us. I've never really thought of myself as brave before tonight, but we *were* brave out there. You even lost your shoe." She joins Karen at the window, and says, "Look."

Karen turns, fearing that Lawrence is still exposing himself, but Orla is pointing at her rosebushes. "The petals have been blown off—or rained off," Orla says. "Isn't that sad?"

By the time they have crossed the street again, Lawrence has put on running shorts and a T-shirt. Karen thinks of dressing but makes coffee instead. There is something tantalizing about wearing only the towel in front of them. This though Lawrence sleeps with her and Orla shared a shower with her only an hour earlier. With the two of them present, Karen feels a tiny thrill, a flush of excitement, and she does not dress.

Lawrence suggests Irish Cream with the coffee, and Orla likes the idea so much she gets up from where she has been sitting on the floor to fetch the bottle.

"Here we are," Karen says to Orla as she rushes by, "two women home from braving the forest *serving* a man who had it no worse than us."

"Uh-oh," Lawrence says and begins to rise. He is lying on the couch, fully extended, his bare legs crossed. "Need any help?"

"We must like to do it," Orla calls from the kitchen. "Either that or we have done it so much we don't think about it anymore."

"I think about it," Karen tells her. She sets the tray of cups on the coffee table.

Lawrence smiles tentatively at her. "I'm a dog, right?"

Karen agrees, settles on the floor, aware that her towel opens at the hip, exposing her full thigh. She enjoys this bit of daring.

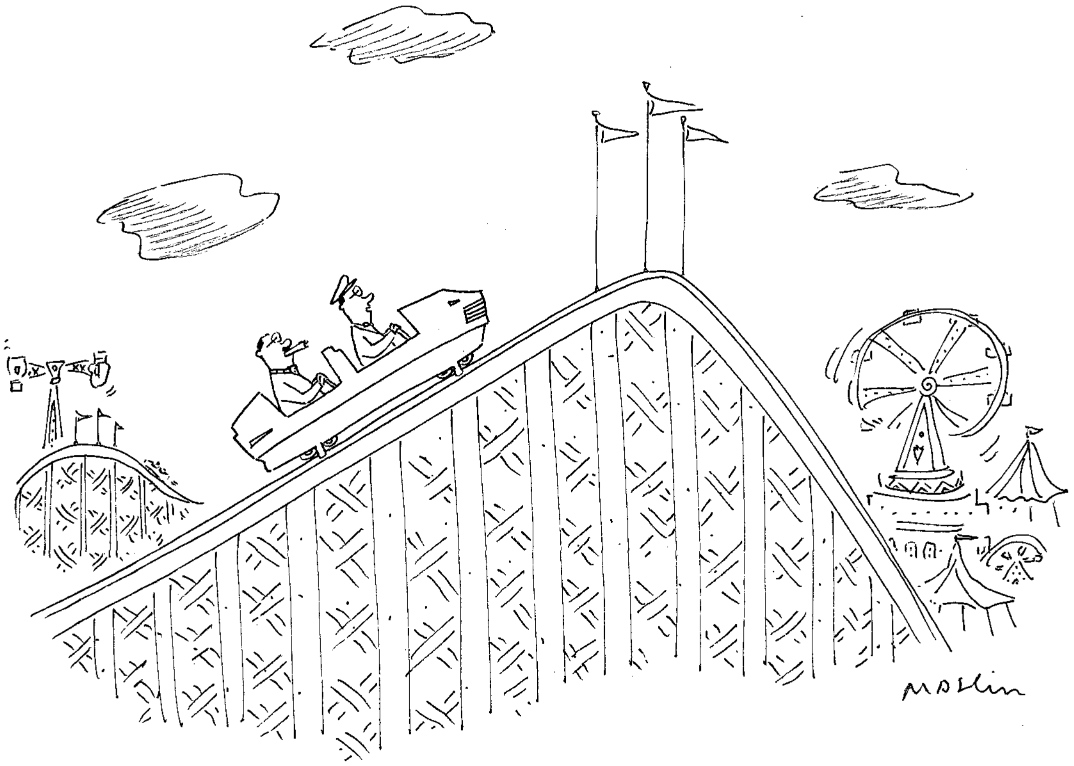
Orla pours the liqueur into each cup. While they drink, she tells Lawrence about the ravine. Karen is surprised by the details—how, in Orla's story, Karen is the hero, persuading Orla to go into the forest in the first place, goading her to continue, until Orla becomes brave purely through Karen's example. The story embarrasses Karen, because she feels it is untrue.

"You were as much the leader as I was," Karen says.

"But you even let me climb out of the ditch first," Orla says. "You could tell my courage was running low."

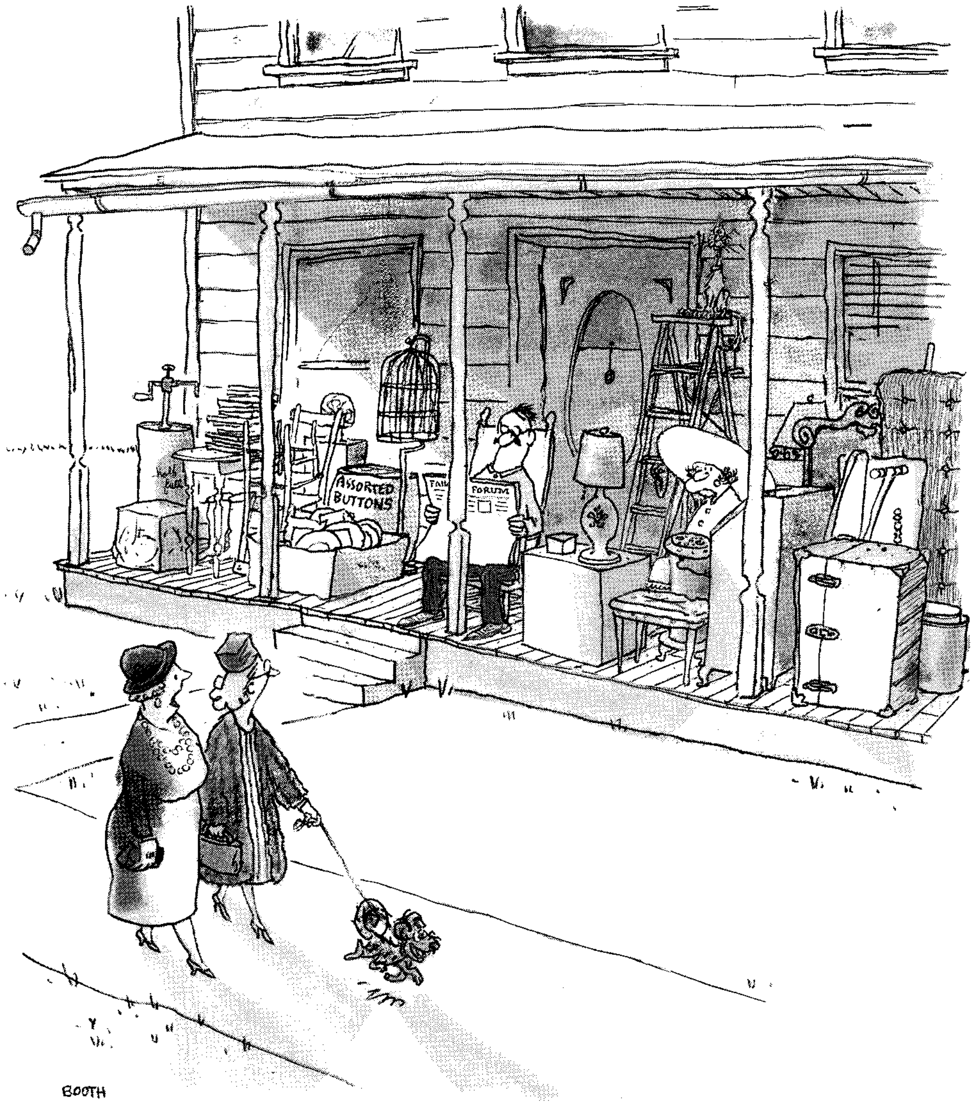
Later in the evening there is a moment in the kitchen when Karen, standing alone over a fresh tray of coffee, hearing the voices of Orla and her husband, removes the towel and picks up the tray, imagining the responses from them if she were to walk naked into the room.

Without taking even a step, she retrieves the towel from the floor, covers her-



"I'm afraid there is no more up, sir—there is only down."

self, and hurries into her bedroom, where she finds sweatpants and a T-shirt.



"He married her for her stuff."

TWO days pass—rainy days that force Karen to remain indoors. She and Orla must return to work in a week—Karen to a nearby high school, where she teaches social studies and government, Orla to the community college, where she teaches art. Weeks earlier they decided to throw a party at the end of the summer, and Karen has spent her time indoors cleaning and talking with caterers. Each minute, however, she has been aware of a difference, a subtle shift in her being. If it were physical, it might be that she has begun holding her shoulders in a new way, or perhaps that she had been overweight and now is thin. But the change is not physical, although there seem to be new vibrations along her spine and through her chest—the change has to do with her orientation. Her closeness to and distance from Lawrence, for example, now fluctuate wildly, though he, apparently, notices nothing new or unusual. And the same is true even with herself, feeling one moment as she has always felt and the next wanting to shed the skin of her present life through some bold action. She has not been the same since entering the forest.

The first guests arrive at nine—the principal of Karen's school and his shy wife, whose name Karen can never remember. The principal is a round man, overweight and bald, round of body and round of head—a bourbon drinker. Usually he talks to Karen about the teachers' union, of which Karen is president, and how he holds nothing against her for the strike of three—now four—years back.

"How's our little organizer?" he says, opening the evening. Karen, rarely at a loss for words, can only smile and shove a bourbon-and-water dangerously close to his face. His wife winces, which is meant to pass as a smile, then looks at the floor and sidles up close to the principal. Her hair, completely gray and in a bun at the back of her head, makes her look a decade older than her round husband. Karen wonders, If the woman were as bald as he, would she look younger? Thinking this and unable to come up with even a single line of small talk, she whirls and calls out, "Orla! Lawrence! Guests!"

By phone, Karen hired two black women to serve food and drinks. They arrive an hour late, with the house already full of people. One of the servingwomen has brought her daughter, who is sixteen, saying to Karen, "She won't be a bit a trouble." The girl, in a green tube top and denim cutoffs, glares at Karen as if daring her to complain.

In the kitchen, the girl positions herself at the table and sips Coca-Cola, crossing her legs like a boy. Guests mill in and out. The two black women talk in front of the girl as if she weren't there.

"She act like a slut, then I treat her like one," says the mother as she unwraps a platter of cheese. A short, busy woman, she moves with exaggerated quickness. Her skin is light, and the lids of her eyes droop as if in response to some great injustice.

The second woman, much taller, thinner, darker, takes up for the girl. "She's practically a grown woman. You were married by her age and had a child of your own."

"I was never no slut."

Karen does not want this conversation to embarrass her, but when guests look her way she finds herself rolling her eyes, as if to say, "What's a person to do?" or, worse, "What can you do with these people?"

Because she cannot tolerate her own behavior, she asks the women to change the topic of their conversation. Now it is they who trade looks. But all they say to her is "Yes, Ma'am, Miss." This strained formality strikes Karen as an insult, and she quickly leaves the kitchen.

Lawrence drinks too fast, as he often does, and when Karen walks by he throws his arm around her shoulders, jostling her drink and his. "You remember Stella," he says, although Stella is in fact Karen's friend, a young social worker who comes to the high school one day a week. "I was just telling Stella about that boy's brother. I was just telling her how coldhearted he was." Lawrence shakes his head to indicate mystery. "You get to know a person pretty well when you spend six hours out in the woods together."

Karen feels Lawrence is bragging, but Stella smiles in a restrained way, which makes it clear that she considers this a flirtation—a story about getting to know someone in the woods. Karen is again embarrassed and quickly makes her way across the room.

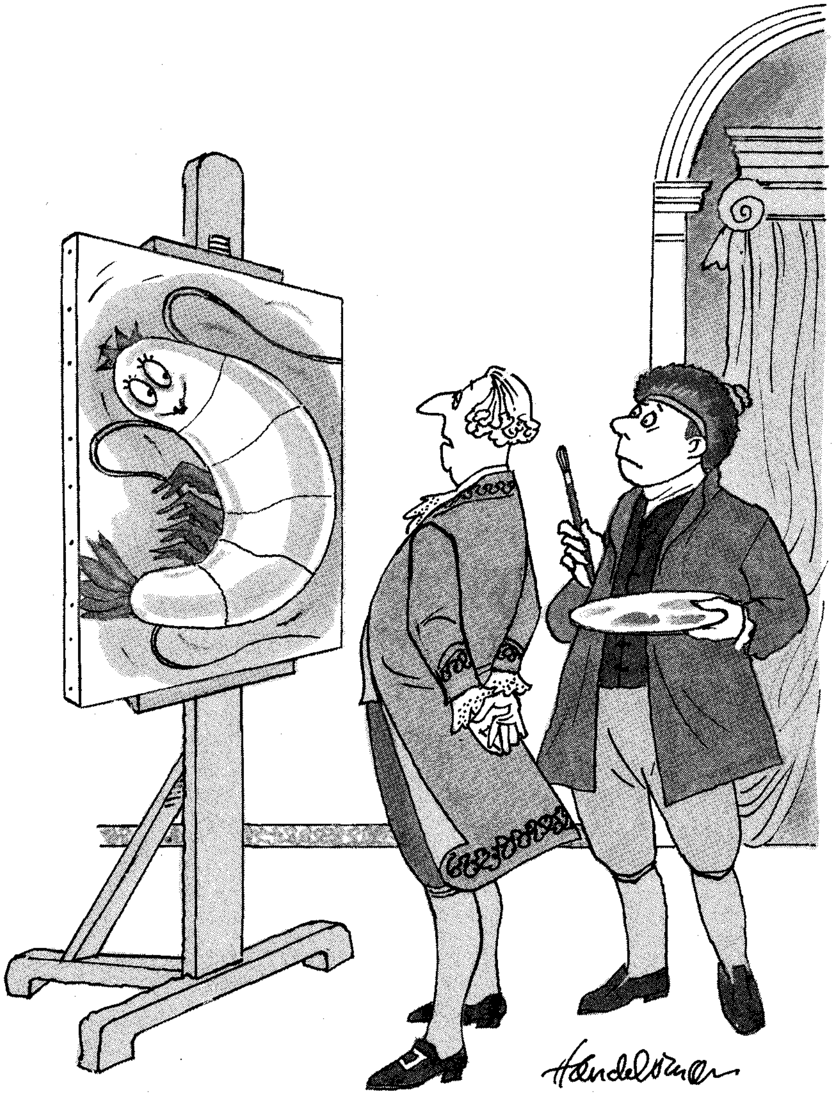
She tries to reach Orla, but the Duncans stop her. They live down the street and are roughly the same age as Karen and Lawrence. Karen thinks that they should all become friends, but each time they get together the evening turns out dull. She sees they have their two-year-old with them.

"Guess what Bonnie said today," Frank Duncan says, lifting the little girl until her red, tired eyes are even with Karen's. "Go ahead, sweetie," he says to the girl, who frowns, her lip trembling as if she might cry.

"Dollie keepy," Jane Duncan says, prompting her daughter. "Dollie keepy."

" 'Keepy' is her word for 'sleepy,' " Frank explains.

Youth is wasted on the young, Karen thinks, and children are wasted on parents.



"May I be candid, Hogarth? I should have thought a shrimp girl would make a more appropriate subject than a girl shrimp."

"Dollie keepy," Jane Duncan repeats.

By the time Karen reaches Orla, Bob Stefford has cornered her and is arguing about modern art. He is a stuffy man in his forties who wears a goatee and writes a column for the local paper. He believes he is an authority on all things cultural. "What's false, as I see it—Hi, Karen, nice party—is that modern art exists only for museums. You don't see it in homes. Why? I'll tell you why. For one thing, most of it is too big. I mean the damn canvases themselves. Think about it."

Karen slips away, noticing with a start that the hors d'oeuvres still have not been served. She makes her way to the kitchen, squeezing between the principal and Lawrence, who block the doorway.

"No doubt they are a troubled family," her principal is saying to Lawrence. "The boy and his brother both. Victims, plain as day."

Karen flashes a sharp look at Lawrence, but he seems not to notice.

"Don't you tell me how to raise my own flesh and blood," the short servingwoman says to the other. She holds an open bottle of white wine in her hand and waves it dramatically. The daughter has left the room.

"Aren't you going to serve the food?" Karen asks.

"Of course we are," the tall one replies, as if insulted. "It's all ready."

"Then serve it," Karen says.

"We just about there," the short woman—the mother—says.

"Serve it now or go home without being paid," Karen tells them. "And don't give me that look."

"What look would that be, Ma'am?"

"You know good and well what look. That wine is for the guests." She is furious, and sees that it has begun to rain again, large drops striking the kitchen windows. The rain adds to her anger. "The cost of that bottle will be deducted from your earnings," she tells them.

The women do not acknowledge this statement. Raising platters over their heads, they step around Karen and into the living room. A high wave of noise—relief—greets the sight of food.

"ARE these people really our friends?" Karen asks Orla. She has finally managed to reach her, and

"I don't know what went wrong."

they huddle in the hall by the bathroom door.

"You're not enjoying yourself?" Orla asks, and Karen is startled to see that she is serious. "Most of them are our friends," she adds. "Except for your principal and that shadow he calls a wife."

Karen smiles, her first genuine smile of the night. "And the serving girls," she says, then corrects herself. "Women. Serving women." The bathroom door opens as she is speaking, and the sixteen-year-old black girl steps out, eying Karen. She gives a little snort, as if to say, "I should have known."

"Christ," Karen says to Orla as the girl walks off. "In novels, they always say 'serving girls'; I didn't mean anything racial by it."

"Racial?" Orla says, "It sounded more sexist to me." She laughs then. "You're strung tight as a violin."

"I think I'm going crazy. I think I've been crazy ever since we got stuck in that ravine."

"I know what you mean," Orla says vaguely, and Karen hopes she will continue, but a man appears down the hall, headed for the bathroom. Orla slips inside first, without saying anything more.

BEFORE the party is over, Karen has shepherded the only black guest—a middle-aged man who teaches chemistry at the community college and whom Karen hardly knows—into the kitchen and then the living room and hall, putting her hand on his shoulder, trying to find the black girl, as if to prove something. The two women are bartending, but the girl cannot be found.

It occurs to Karen that she herself is no different from anyone else here—as narrow and foolish. This depresses her. She wants Lawrence now, and leaves the chemistry professor to search for him.

She finds her husband on the couch, talking. As Karen nears, she sees through the crowd that he is conversing with the black girl, who is nodding at him and says, "I know the brother. He act like he the best thing on two feet."

"I wanted to blame the family, you see? Here they are, could be victims of a tragedy, and I wanted to make them responsible."

The girl adjusts her tube top, pulling up each side. "If the family is all like him, they are a sorry bunch. They are. You don't got to feel worser than they do."

Karen examines Lawrence then. He looks bereaved, as if the missing boy belonged to him and were never found. He suddenly excuses himself and crosses the room. Karen hears the door to their bedroom open and close. He will shove purses and raincoats to one side of the bed and stretch out on the other. For Lawrence, the party is over.

"He takes things hard," the girl explains to Karen, as if Lawrence were her friend and Karen the stranger. "He feels bad for every little thing he thinks."

"Does he?" Karen asks her.

But now the girl only shrugs. "He's your husband."

FOR Karen, the party does not end until after three in the morning. All the guests are finally gone. Even Orla, who spent the evening talking to one man and then another, gave it up an hour earlier. Paying the serving-women—without deducting for the wine—Karen tries to apologize. "I hope this wasn't too awful," she says.

They only nod, not in agreement but in acknowledgment of her half apology. This angers Karen, as they were the ones who were late and who made a scene. The women wake the girl, who is asleep on the couch, and they shut the door silently when they leave. Before their car pulls away, one of them yells, "Bitch!"

Exhausted, Karen cannot sleep. The restlessness is stronger now than ever. She hated the party—every moment but the few she spent alone with Orla. And now she decides that she wants

COMPASS READING

The solid shapes and weights of anchors
inhabit every room. Through the tall stems
of the chrysanthemums in the yellow vase
shaped like a rough sketch of the womb
in fired earth glazed Naples yellow
I look out at the turning weather, at
the rose-of-Sharon bush bent under
the weight of papery pink blossoms bitten
by a first frost, and at the birds—
whose hungers sharpen, startling their
seasoned hearts out of the leaves to our feeder
as the leaves give up their golden ghosts
and stiffen, falling with a dry small crash
from branch to branch. They pave the garden and
the road's margin with, for a little while,
brightness. This morning the cat pawed up
against the glass storm door, her eyes
wild and satisfied, a dead bird bristling
like a fistful of pale gray-brown feathers
between her jaws. Shouting, slamming open,
I rescued the broken neck, closed eyes,
poor tuft, and ruffled wings, the chest
still soft and warm, and placed them
out of harm's way, as if it mattered,
in the mailbox. Later, when it got dark,
I took and threw the titmouse among the
leaves still clinging to the trees and hedges
at the back of the house: as it flew from my hand
it gave, I thought, the smallest sigh, or
was it the way it broke the air, the air
opening for it, taking its little weight
for the last time? I heard it fall, a dry
tiny splash among twigs and leaves
where it will lie, grow less itself, unravel
back to bone, to mold, to dust, to next
year's fierce leaf whose feathers and songs
will stand up to anything. These days I seem
as heartless as a lock that is all innards
and bitter tongue: wherever my ears go
they hear nothing but clocks ticking, each
tick a little penetration of air, a pulsebeat
greeting its own goodbye, dressed up in
anchors and rose of Sharon. What grows
is only the second skin of dew on leaves, on
delicate leather, a light gauze, short-lived,
over the front steps where the neat dark
footpads of the cat are printed, who stalks
all night the shadows of her unspeakable hunger
and explodes in momentary blossoms of
savage action, smothering the small cries
of the scuttled mouse, the bird's first
arrested screech: she tastes a salt smear
of blood across tongue and teeth, and she knows
the ripe smell of death, the face of terror,
the terminal spasm, but she will not be appeased.

—EAMON GRENNAN

• •

to dance. It seems to her that every good party she ever went to included dancing. She cannot think of a single social event that was any fun that did not have at least one interval of dancing.

Lawrence, though sound asleep, is still in his clothes. She puts on a robe and gently shakes him. When his head rises, she says, "You feel like dancing?" He smiles at her and lets his head drop back to the pillow. "I'm serious," she tells him. "Dance with me."

He makes a halfhearted effort to sit up, raising himself to one elbow. "The party over?"

"Not until we dance. What do you say?"

"Oh, Karen." His head flops back again. "I'm really tired." He yawns as if to prove his honesty. "I'm a dog, right?"

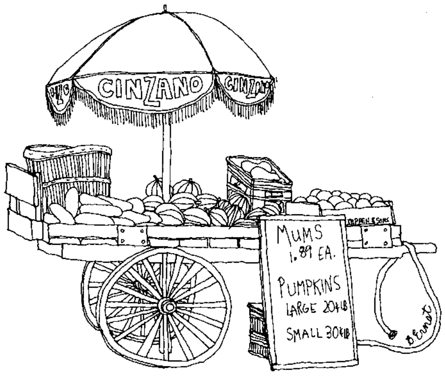
She doesn't answer but rushes out of the bedroom and across the cluttered living-room floor. She bolts out the front door, not bothering to close it, and across the asphalt. Rain is falling lightly, and she has begun to cry.

Through Orla's living-room window Karen spots a light in the kitchen, and through the doorway she sees the kitchen table and Orla's elbows firmly planted on the surface. Orla's head now appears and leans against her arms. She is crying.

It is true, then, Karen thinks, as if what just occurred to her is something she had secretly known. Orla loves her, and she—it must be true, she is standing here in the middle of the night staring in Orla's window—loves Orla.

Before Karen can act on this thought, hands slide across the table from the opposite side. A man's hands. They touch Orla's dark and tangled hair.

Karen turns and runs back across the street. Already she discounts what a moment ago she thought absolutely true. By the time she sees Lawrence kneeling over the stereo, placing the needle in a groove, she has pushed the feelings she imagined she had for Orla out of her mind.



Lawrence takes her in his arms. "I just had too much to drink," he says. "It doesn't mean *anything*." He's worried what she thinks of him.

"I feel wild inside," she tells him.

The music begins and they dance.

THE following day, Karen returns to the ravine. The association she makes between the forest and the dark is so powerful that she takes the flashlight despite the sunny, humid afternoon.

The sky is clear, although rain is predicted for the evening. Once she is past the wall of kudzu and striding between oaks, the flashlight annoys her —the fact that she thought to take it but did not think of its uselessness. She places it in a bed of moss, noting the spot so that she can find it when she comes back.

The powerful desire to return to the

forest changes now, as she enters it, into oblique longing—desire without an object. She cannot reconcile the existence of the ravine and the night of wading through water with the existence of the party and the night of dealing with foolish people. And she cannot reconcile the many sides of herself—the woman who married so pragmatically just two years past, the woman who called the black women "girls" and dragged the chemistry professor about like a badge of decency, and the woman who ran barefoot across the street to see Orla. How can all of these people be her?

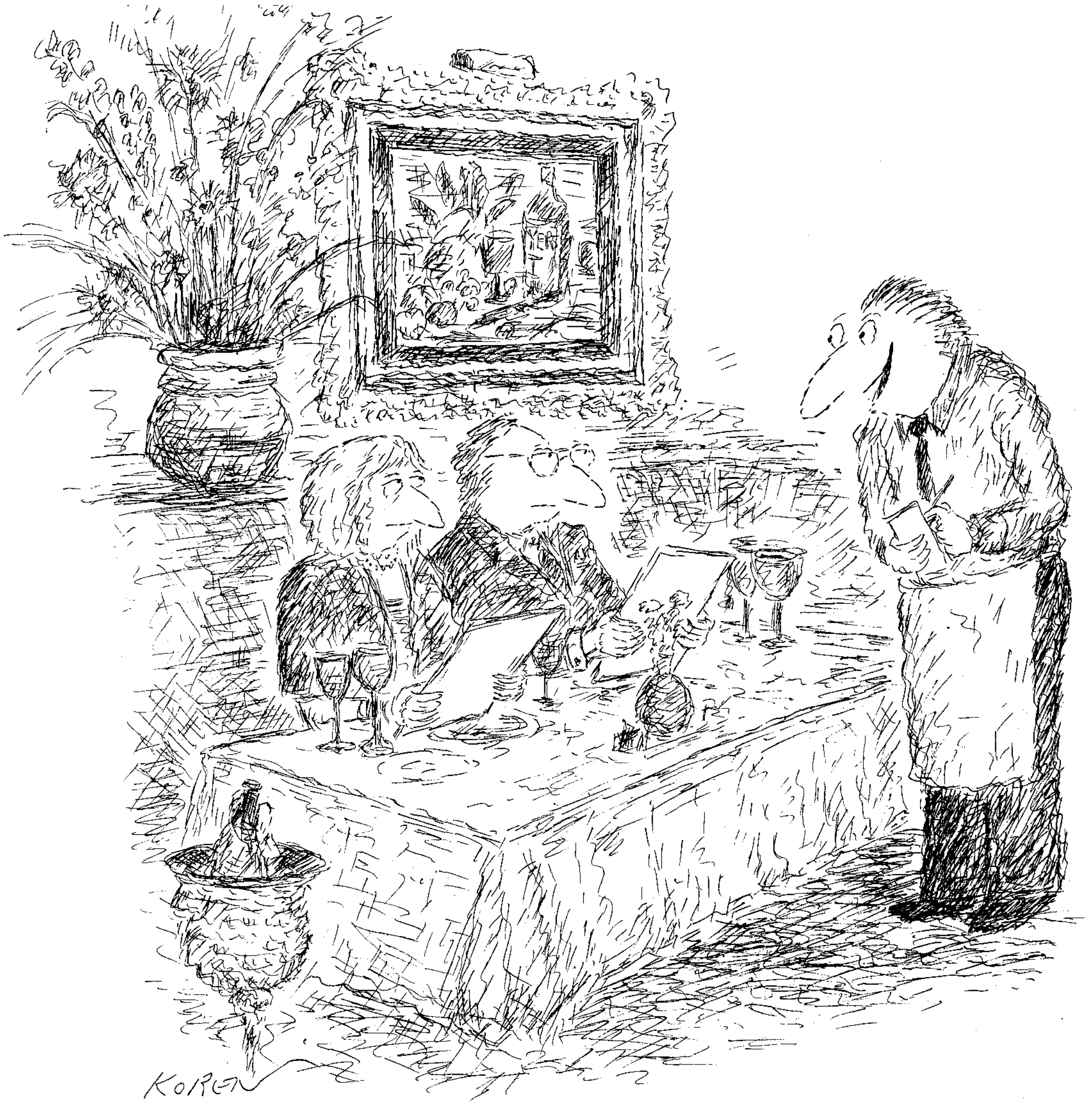
Daylight transforms the forest. Leafy shadows cast a lacy pattern over her blouse. Birds flitter from tree to tree. Shards of sunlight warm her neck. The sweet odor of rot pervades everything.

She expects to come to the ravine just past the next tree or over the next rise, but it eludes her and she settles on a protruding rock as a place to have lunch, which dangles from her wrist in a plastic grocery sack. A chicken-salad sandwich and two Oreo cookies, a capped jar of cool water—the ice cubes she put in it have melted. Mosquitoes bother her, and she eats quickly.

A few yards farther into the forest, she steps into a spider's web, the fine netting pressing delicately against her face. She pulls back and swats at the web. The spider makes her appearance, frantically repairing the tear, spreading her fine threads from branch to branch.

Karen is almost ready to turn around when at last she finds the ravine. It is full of muddy water, a fact that startles and frightens her. She removes one shoe and dips her foot into the stagnant, brown water, which is warmer than she would have guessed. She considers a swim, dismisses the idea, considers it again. Then she begins her hike homeward.

Coming here has resolved nothing. She remembers Orla's forehead resting against her arms on the table, Orla crying, the mysterious hands. She marches out of the forest into the afternoon sun and forgets the flashlight.



"Today's big story is eggplant."

• •

IT is almost dusk. Karen sits on the concrete driveway of Orla's house, waiting. A blue raincoat is draped across her lap. She drinks a glass of wine so as to have something to do. Across the street, Lawrence tromps about making supper. He is still in his work clothes—jeans and khaki shirt. Whenever he passes through the living room, he glances out at her. She can see that he is worried. It occurs to her that he invited no one to the party.

Orla's Chevette finally appears down the street, and as it draws near Karen can see that Orla has been to the beauty parlor; her hair is once again perfectly awful. When the car has pulled into the driveway and Orla has stepped out of it and paused before the still seated Karen, Karen says, "Why'd you buy this big house? You have three bedrooms and two baths. I don't even see how you can afford it."

Orla laughs and grins her toothy smile. "You're mad because I left the party mess for you and the serving *girls* to clean by yourselves."

"They don't get paid to clean," Karen says, standing. She is wearing the same clothing she wore when they went into the ravine—denim jeans, blue cotton shirt.

Orla bends over to retrieve Karen's glass of wine. "I'm sorry, Karen. I didn't mean to leave you all that mess."

"Make it up to me," Karen says. "Come with me into the forest."

Orla smiles as if she thinks Karen is joking. "Now? It's almost dark. It's going to rain." Just then a gust of wind rustles Orla's skirt.

"It's important to me," Karen tells her. "Lawrence is making dinner for all of us."

"Are you all right? Are you mad at me?"

"I'm not mad," she says, although what she feels is a sort of madness, like being turned on her head. "I just want to go back there."

In the house, Karen steps into Orla's bedroom to watch her change. Orla pulls her blouse over her head, talking all the while about something trivial that happened at the beauty parlor. Those long, thin arms. Then she steps out of her skirt. Her legs, so white, smooth, but though Karen can imagine being attracted to this body she is not, and sees Orla as a giant wading bird. It isn't sex, Karen realizes. She was silly to think it had to do with sex. But it *is* something—some power, some cloud through which Karen now sees the world.

Lawrence is waiting for them on the sidewalk outside Orla's door. "So you're going to do this?"

It isn't clear whether he's asking Karen or Orla, but Orla responds with a laugh. "Make us something hearty, dear. We're going off into the wilderness."

Lawrence produces a smile that quickly vanishes, and Karen realizes that he was asking her—and his question meant "Are you leaving me?"

Karen says to him, "I love you, and I'll be back soon."

As they walk away, Orla says, "Oh," and turns to Lawrence, who has not moved. "I saw those boys today. The one who was missing and his brother—the one you were with."

Lawrence raises his brows. "How are they?"

"The missing boy has a cast on his leg and his brother was getting everyone who was a searcher to sign it. They seemed like nice boys. I thought you'd want to know."

"Yeah," Lawrence says. "I got a thank-you note from their mother."

BY the time they reach the wall of kudzu, darkness is imminent. Orla has brought her flashlight and shines it at the opening. "Are we going to try to reproduce this exactly?" she asks Karen. "Are we looking for something?"

"I don't know," Karen tells her. She feels as she did this afternoon. Once she enters the forest, she loses conviction that her longing has to do with the forest. But she is at a loss about what else she might do—and this frightens her, because it seems that she might do anything.

"Let me know what we're up to *some*time," Orla says pleasantly.

A few feet into the woods, Karen spots the bed of moss where she left her flashlight. Beads of water spot the lens, but it still works. "I don't remember your losing that," Orla says, confused and surprised.

Karen tells her about the afternoon hike, then adds, "I've been a different person since we were here, so I came back. It wasn't the same without you. I can't explain it, exactly, but I'm trying to understand it."

"It?"

"*It*—whatever has made me different."

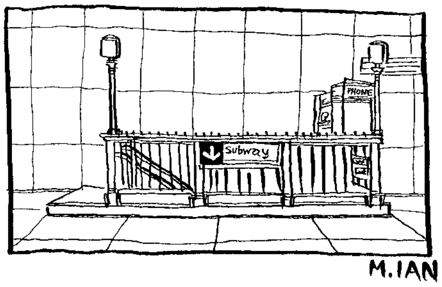
Orla nods, serious now, her dark brows merging.

The forest in the dying light holds pockets of mist. They hover just above the ground like angels. Rain begins to patter against the high branches. Their flashlights sweep the forest floor: moss, mold, rotting leaves, fallen branches. They move deeper into the woods, the darkness thickens, the rain grows more severe.

Orla stops to slip on her raincoat, a clear plastic thing. Karen slides her arms into the blue sleeves of her coat. They are not talking now, flashing their little lights on mushrooms, weeds, a few wildflowers. Karen feels the mysterious force that has taken hold of her deepen, as if in anticipation. They move forward; rain makes the ground slick.

Finally, they come to the ravine. Although the water was deep only this afternoon, it is now shallow. Blades of grass are flattened against the banks, pointing downward.

"Do we have to go down there?" Orla asks. "I don't see the point." She moves her light over the steep slope, the muddy ledge, and then she steadies the beam and shines it on a knob at the top of the bank. "What's this?" she says, taking a step and kneeling.



Rising from the hardened mud like a tiny stump is Karen's lost shoe.

As Karen accepts the shoe from her friend, *it* suddenly goes away. The vibration, the sense of mystery—gone. How does this make sense, she wonders. How can the loss of a shoe change your life? How can its return change it again?

She feels thoroughly deflated and ready to go home. She turns from Orla without looking up. They walk quickly, retracing their steps. A wind washes across the treetops, and when it passes the forest becomes unusually quiet.

"Listen," Orla says.

Karen pauses. There it is, the faintest sound, a clack and then a clank—the gate of someone's fence, some other family's, one nearby. Karen turns to Orla. She wants to touch her, kiss her, hold her big, birdlike frame. Shining her light on Orla's pale face, she sees her—really sees her—and hears the distant gate whacking a wooden fence and then its latch, and sees the bad haircut in the transparent rain hood. Orla, listening to the gate, standing still to hear, reveals herself as she did not disrobing. Not a wading bird but a graceless, unbeautiful woman, nearing middle age, childless, living in a house too big for one person. And then Karen sees her more clearly still, not her hair or her toothy smile, but *her*—an astonishing creature, beautiful as a creature as she is not as a woman—and though she looks familiar she also looks strange, as if life distilled down to its purest thing had been poured into this gawky mold.

The gate's latch suddenly catches, and the silence that follows is the final death of Karen's madness.

"I'm hungry," she says suddenly.

"Me, too," Orla tells her. "I'm starving."

Then Karen warns, "Lawrence is no chef."

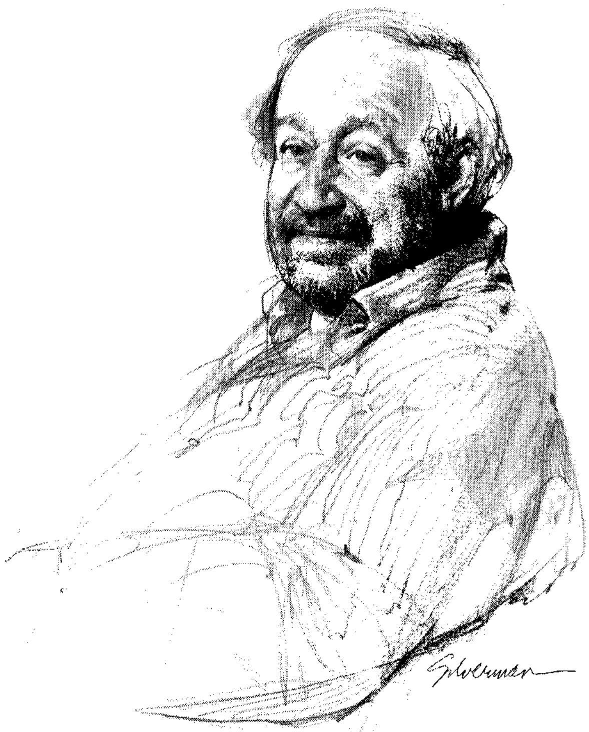
Orla laughs. Their lights shine forward at the wall of vines and the leafy opening. They emerge from the woods together, stepping into the downpour of rain. —ROBERT BOSWELL

PROFILES

FILM RESOURCE

THE Cinephiles, a loosely organized group of about five hundred film buffs, meet three times a year: in Syracuse, New York, early in March; in Columbus, Ohio, on Memorial Day weekend; and on Labor Day weekend. The Labor Day meeting has a different host each year, and its site is determined by where the host lives. The 1988 meeting took place in Saginaw, Michigan, and this year's was in Cleveland. The group got its impetus twenty-seven years ago, when Samuel Rubin, a silent-film collector from Indiana, Pennsylvania, compiled and sent to other collectors a four-page pamphlet listing extant silent films available. Two years later, the collectors met for the first time, in his home town, and they have since held Labor Day gatherings in, among other places, Chicago, Milwaukee, Toronto, New York, and Hollywood. Hollywood may one day be chosen as a permanent meeting place, partly because a large number of members live there and also because there are more retired movie stars to invite as guests.

At the Labor Day meeting, the members, who are overwhelmingly male, spend mornings, afternoons, and evenings, from Friday through Monday noon, screening feature pictures—usually around four dozen—along with short subjects and occasional scraps of film. The pictures are shown either in the ballroom of the hotel where the members are staying or, as was possible in Saginaw, in one of the country's many dark picture houses. The 1988 *Cinephile Newsletter* contained, besides a summary of the weekend activities, reproductions of the original advertisements for some of the films: Raymond Griffith in "You'd Be Surprised"; "A Son of the Sahara (His Slave—She a White Girl—He an Arab Sheik)"; Agnes Ayres in "The Guilty One"; Gloria Swanson in "The Untamed Lady"; and Colleen Moore in "The Perfect Flapper."



Herb Graff

A Cinephile named Herb Graff ran the 1976 Labor Day get-together, in New York. He managed to get Madge Evans and her husband, Sidney Kingsley, as guests, and on the last day he got Myrna Loy. He had tried for Gloria Swanson, but a mimeographed sheet that listed her requirements included a demand for a Bentley to pick her up and take her home. "We sent Myrna Loy a cab," Graff recalls. "It's a pleasure."

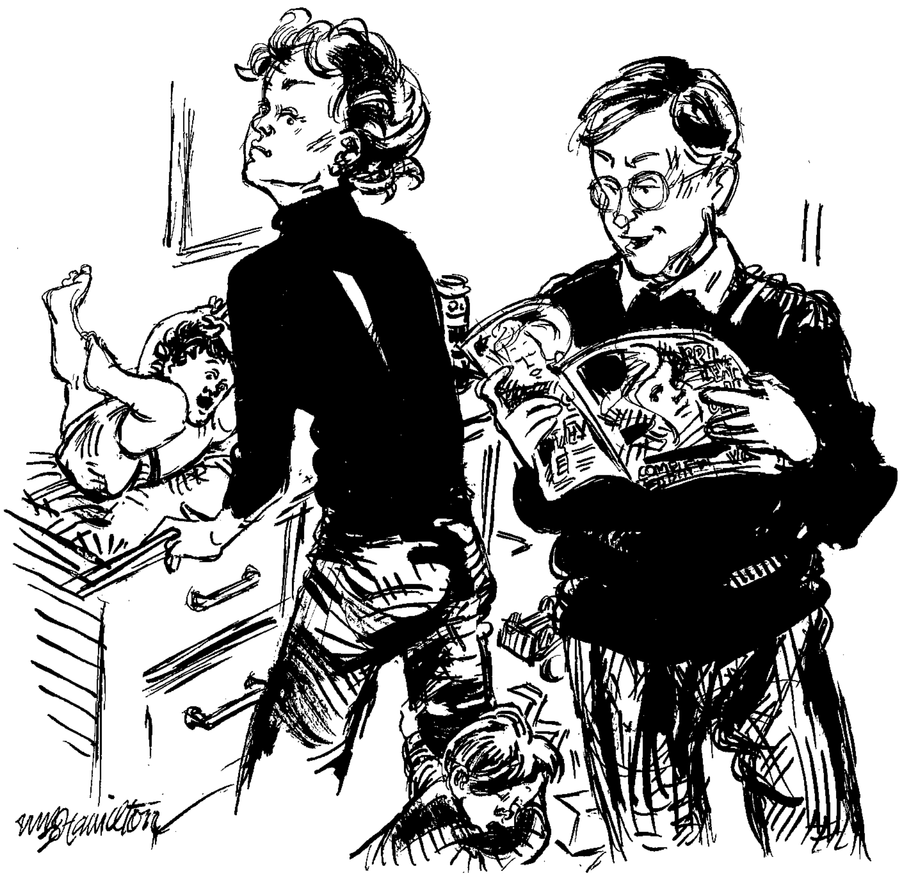
At sixty-three, Herb Graff is a legend among the Cinephiles. He was born in Boston, and when he was just a few months old his father, a rabbi, died, and his mother took him and his sister to East New York, Brooklyn, her former neighborhood. It was assumed that Graff would become a rabbi, and he was enrolled in yeshiva, where he spent twelve years—until 1943, when he joined the Navy. The school's morning hours, from eight-thirty to eleven-thirty, were taken up by Hebrew studies. In the afternoon, there were mostly English classes from noon to six-forty-five, with a break from one-thirty to two.

"When I was going to school, we lived six blocks away from the neighborhood 'dump,' the Miller Theatre," Graff says. "I used to walk those six blocks at eleven-thirty to go to the Miller. They were cleaning it—washing it with lye, that terrible smell. And I used to go there and just look at the lobby cards and the eight-by-ten stills. Then, at twelve o'clock, I would go back to school."

He saw Chaplin for the first time in 1936, when he was ten. His uncle took him to "Modern Times." He saw it first at Loew's Premier, then, the following week, at Loew's Warwick, and after that at one of the "dumps." Not long after, his mother took him to the Museum of Modern Art, where a retrospective of Chaplin two-reelers was being shown. Chaplin changed Graff's life. He says, "It stopped me from being a bum. Every time I went to the museum was one less time I went to the poolroom."

GRAFF is of medium height and is growing bald. He has rumpled features, obscured by what is meant to be a beard. Soberly dressed, and with a half-thrusting, half-tentative gait, he could pass for an extra in a black-and-white B-movie. His speech is polite but emphatic, and even enthusiastic—a style polished over years spent as a salesman for a children's-wear wholesaler in the garment district. "White, blue, pink, beige—that's all you had to know," he says. Now he makes a living as a consultant and lecturer on early talkies, and he has a discreet calling card bearing the simple legend "Film Resource." This construction is patterned on the calling card of his friend the writer Isaac Asimov. Asimov's card reads "Human Resource."

Graff began collecting film while he was in his teens. He bought scraps of film discarded by film exchanges, and one-reelers, condensed from two-reel-



"Hey, here's somebody who looks just like a young you!"

• •

ers, that sold for a few dollars at Macy's. Mostly, he bought early Chaplin. By the time he got his job in the garment industry, in 1947, he had a considerable collection, which he kept in the Brooklyn apartment that he shared with his wife, Anita. As a wedding gift someone had given them a 16-mm. projector, which replaced a projector he had been given at thirteen for his bar mitzvah.

In 1960, he began a series of film screenings, and he has continued the screenings ever since. "I was working; I had children; I didn't have money to buy film. I needed money to subsidize the hobby," he says. "So I started doing lectures in the neighborhood. The first was at the Manhattan Beach Jewish Center. A friend of mine had a group there. They paid me thirty-five dollars. They needed reasons for fellows to meet girls. They were going to do an old-fashioned night. Bring your projector, they told me, and your screen, and an hour's worth of Chaplin shorts. I had prepared a whole speech about the nuances of Chaplin's genius, and discovered, much to my chagrin, that nobody wanted to listen to me. All the girls came to meet a guy, and all the guys came to make out. But the rabbi saw the show and asked if I would do the same thing for other groups. The thirties to forties were called the youth group, the forties to fifties the adult youth group, the fifties to sixties the *mature* youth group, the sixties to seventies the golden-age youth group.

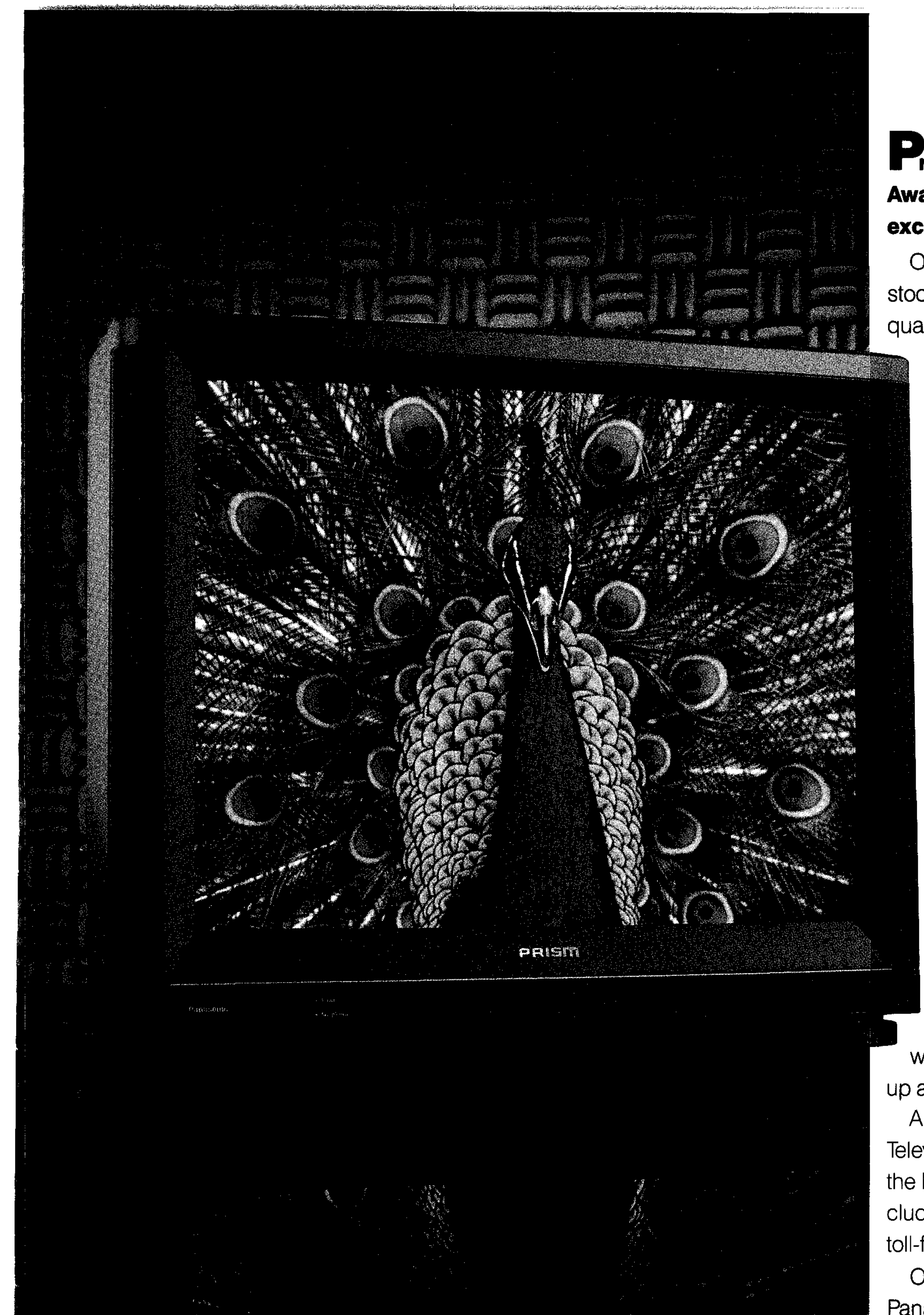
"A guy from the Children's Aid Society came once and asked for a similar program in the Village. At that showing, a man named Richard Meyer, from Channel 13, was present, and he asked would I show my films on television. 'Hey! I've finally been discovered,' I told myself. 'I'll start with Channel 13, and in a couple of years I'll be ready for the big time—CBS, NBC.' Meyer said, 'I have to fill in one full week, Christmas, and we have no budget whatsoever. Can you lend us Chaplin films?' I lent him the films. A while later, he said, 'Maybe you and I could do an intro.' We took a plane to Albany, and there he was able to get the local PBS station at the state university to give us an hour to do intros for Chaplin films. I did two, three years with him, until he left for a better job, in Seattle. Then I took over and did ten shows, with a guest on each one.

"Everybody loves old films—everybody. But we're the only country that never gave film the respect it deserves. Belgium! You find there the largest collection in the world of early Westerns—Tim McCoy, Hoot Gibson, Ken Maynard. Seventy per cent of all silent film was lost. It deteriorated, it was thrown away, was destroyed. Nitrate is an odd thing. You can open a nitrate film from seventy years ago, and it can be pristine. You can open a film from 1952, when they stopped using it, and it will have deteriorated completely. Nobody knows."

For the most part, the movies that can be rented by a collector and shown for profit are those in the public domain. But that includes a great deal: most of the Chaplin two-reelers, for example, and even "The Gold Rush." (When Chaplin added sound to the film, in 1942, he copyrighted that version but neglected to renew the copyright for the original silent.) And there are highly regarded sound films —"His Girl Friday" and "My Man Godfrey," to name two—that are in the public domain. According to Graff, this is usually explained by a euphemism: "executive oversight."

"Silent film can be taught as a complete subject," Graff says. "Walter Kerr said that silent film is the only art that has a beginning, a middle, and an end. All other art continues. In 1971, the Museum of Modern Art put on a series of film musicals made between 1927 and 1932, or up to 'Forty-second Street.' That was when movie musicals —a hundred were made in 1929 and only thirty the following year—were rejuvenated by Busby Berkeley. The museum wanted to open with a bang, with 'Whoopee,' but found out that the only available print was in Czechoslovakia and had Czech subtitles. But it was lent to the museum, and it opened the series. Samuel Goldwyn heard about it and got permission from the Czechs, through the museum, to have a print made. Suddenly, beautiful prints turned up here. I could never understand it.

" 'King of Jazz' is another example. For years, Benito Mussolini was a film



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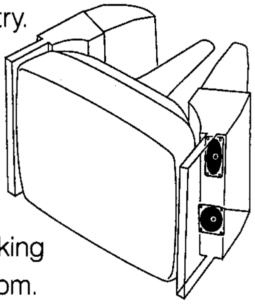

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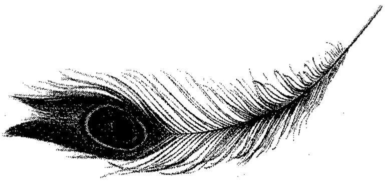

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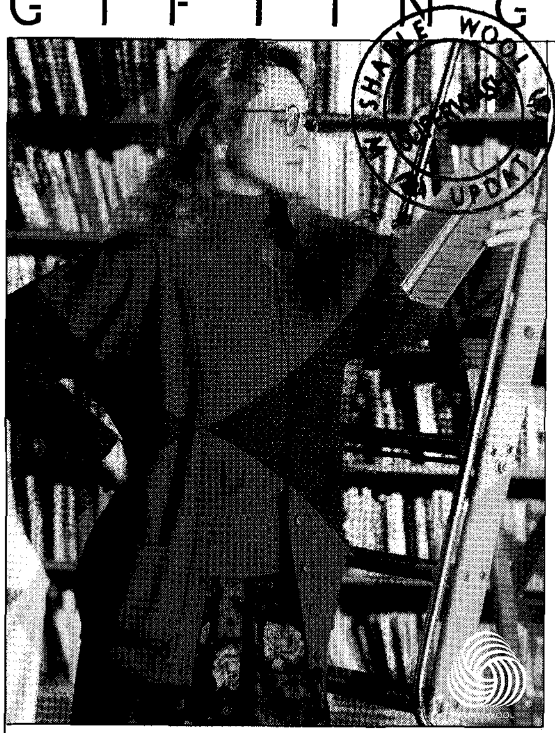

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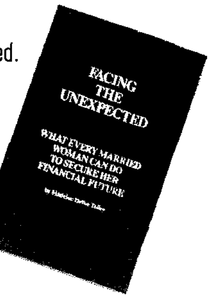
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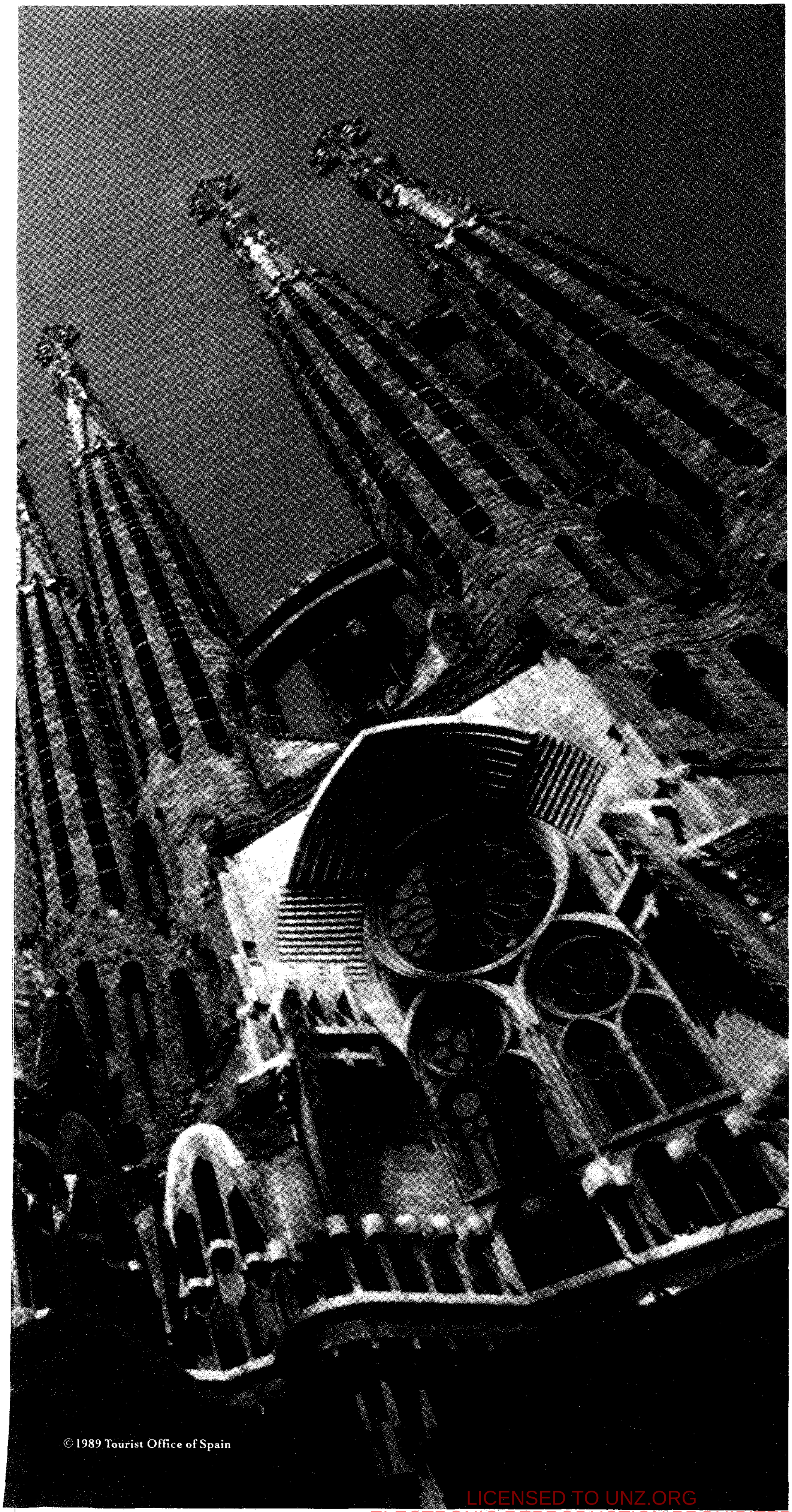
collector. When he was killed, his entire collection disappeared. Somehow, Mussolini's copy of 'King of Jazz' got into the hands of the British Bing Crosby Fan Club. Every year, on Crosby's birthday, they showed the three sequences in which Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys—Crosby, Al Rinker, Harry Barris—appeared. Word got around, and a print was made. Then, magically, in 1970 Universal found beautiful prints of it. As a matter of fact, there are millions of feet of old film still to be found. Who was to know—I'm talking about the motion-picture point of view—that film was to become an art, that there was a certain worth to it? Painting was an art that became a business. Film was a business that became an art."

When Graff was asked once about his favorite films, he said, "Instead of 'favorite films' I think of what movies I'd want to see if I were stranded on a desert island. It's not the same thing. I might consider 'Citizen Kane' a great movie, but I wouldn't want to see it over and over." And he made this list:

(1) "City Lights"
(2) "Our Hospitality"
(3) Any Paramount Marx Brothers film (before they had love stories)
(4) "Top Hat"
(5) "Dodsworth"
(6) "Counsellor-at-Law"
(7) "Pinocchio"
(8) "A New Leaf"
(9) "Annie Hall"
(10) "My Favorite Year."

As a collector, Graff concentrates on the early talkies, especially musicals, though his collection extends into the nineteen-forties. In 1972, he was invited by New York University to give shows at Town Hall, which the university owned, but which was then, he says, "in the throes of bankruptcy," Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall having drawn away a major part of the concert business. David Saltonstall, a former vice-director of administration at the Brooklyn Museum, who had seen Graff's work there, and who had become the head of the arts program at the Andrew Mellon Foundation, recommended Graff to Town Hall.

Graff: "When I was at Town Hall —that was 1972 and '73—I did twenty-five Saturday-afternoon shows. The series was called 'Films for the Young,' and the ad said, 'See What Your Folks Saw When They Were Your Age.' I showed a cartoon, a serial, a Three Stooges, and a B-West-



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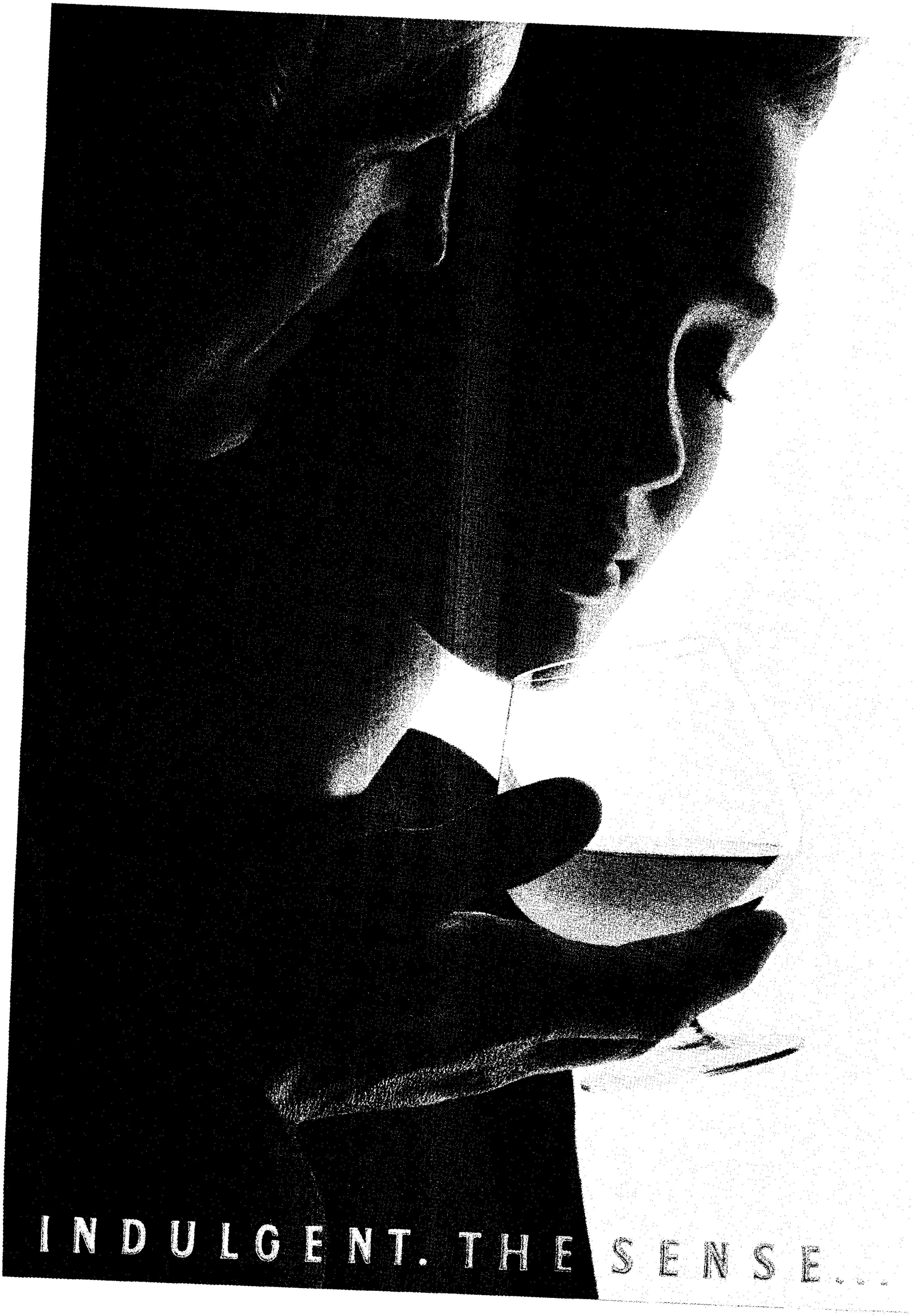
INDULGENT. THE SENSE...

ern or an action film. I played music—records—from one to two o'clock, and films from two to five. I didn't know what kind of crowd I was going to draw. I got the film buffs. I also got the serial buffs, a group of people who never grew up. But what I got, which was unique, I got the divorced guys in New York—all the guys that have their children for the day and don't know what to do with them. And all of a sudden I offered them this opportunity for one buck. Look, they could bring their kids in, it would cost them maybe three dollars. They came in at one o'clock Saturday, sat and listened to the music, and the kids loved the Three Stooges and the cartoons, and then, at five o'clock, they were finished, and they spent, like, a full day with their kids, and they would take them to Nathan's for a frankfurter, and then the day was done. And I never realized it till one day—it was a terrible day—this guy comes over to me and says, 'I wanna thank you, Mr. Graff. This beats rowing in Central Park.'

"I say there's a certain type who goes to see the serials, who hasn't grown up. I showed 'Captain Marvel.' Now, this was before it appeared on TV, and it was a serial that hadn't been around. I started to get a clique of people thirty to forty years old who came every week—not for the movie but for the serial. They got hooked, just as if it were back in '41. The villain in 'Captain Marvel' was The Scorpion. There was always a guy with a mask on—you didn't know who it was till the last chapter. Anyhow, there was this little man who came every week. I knew there was something odd about him, because he wore stockings and rubbers, no shoes. And that already threw me—white stockings with rubbers. And he came for eleven straight weeks, alone. And in the eleventh week he came to me. He said, 'I have to go to a wedding next week, and I won't be able to come to the finish. I have to know who The Scorpion is.' Here's a man in his forties or fifties, you know. So I said to him, 'Well, as a rule I don't tell, but it was Bentley.' He said, 'What!' I said, 'Bentley was The Scorpion.' He says, 'You're kidding me.' I said no. He said, 'Bentley! Wow!' The next week, I see him. I said, 'I thought you had a wedding.' He said to me, 'Yeah, but what if you lied?' "

Graff left his job in the garment industry in 1983. "I was in London," he says, "and I was walking on the Strand, and I passed a building that had a plaque that said 'Here Lived Ivor Novello—Actor, Manager, and Composer—1893-1951,' or something like that. And I said to myself, 'My God in Heaven, here's a man, he lived till he was fifty-eight years old, and he wrote plays, and he wrote films, and he had a full life.' And I said, 'Here am I, past fifty, and if I were to die my tombstone would read "Here Lies Herb Graff. Sold Shirts in White, Pink, Beige, and Blue, and Every Five Years Lilac." ' And as soon as I got back to New York I quit. I called a friend with a small movie business, Castle Hill, in New York, and he offered me a job. So a hobby that became an avocation then became a vocation."

The next year, his wife of twenty-five years decided that he was more interested in old films than he was in her and asked him to leave their Brooklyn house. Their children—two sons and a daughter—were grown. He rented a small apartment on West Fifty-seventh Street, where he now lives.

Around that time, a representative of Life Savers approached Graff. The company was bringing out a new candy and wanted to publicize it by putting on a forty-minute morning movie show for children at a movie house in Salisbury, North Carolina. Graff assembled footage of the Three Stooges and some cartoons. Before the campaign began, the firm's advertising man said, "Now, listen, this is the way to sell candy. You go into a big place like Pathmark and say, 'I've got this great new candy.' And the guy says to you, 'I'm sorry, I don't need any more venders.' And you say, 'But you don't understand. This is a special great new candy, and it's gonna blow out the store.' And he says, 'Even if I wanted to buy it, I don't

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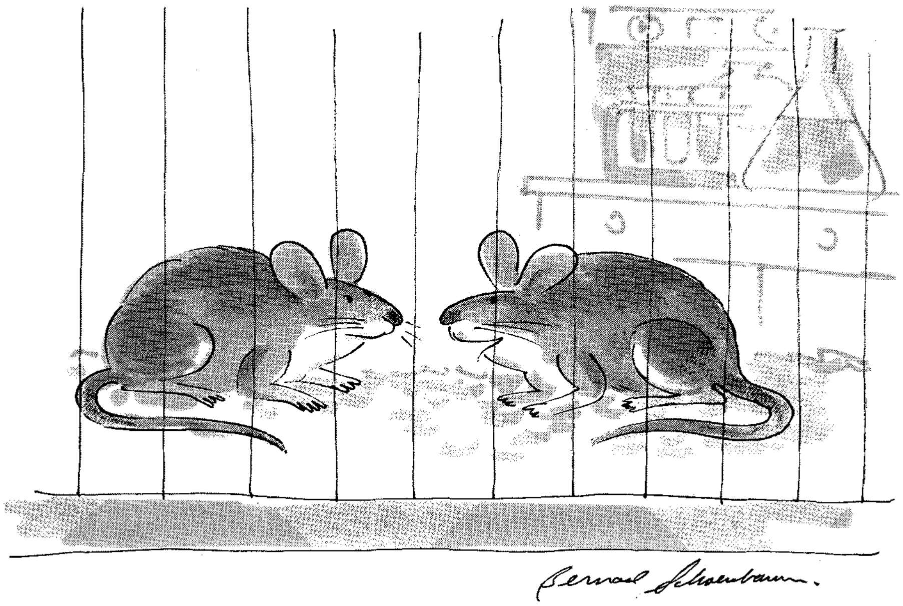

"He's nice, but all his best qualities were bred out of him."

• •

have the shelf space.' And you say, 'But we're gonna have special contests and awards.'

"So finally, I say to the guy, 'Listen, you don't have to tell me any more. I'm saying the same thing about shirts, about underwear, about pants. In fact, you left out one line.' 'What's that?' the guy says. 'We always finish the spiel with "We're doing a great job at Macy's." ' And he said to me, 'We say Food Fair.' "

BACK in 1967, Graff learned from reading a piece about the hobbies of celebrities that Walter Kerr, then the drama critic of the *Herald Tribune*, collected old movies. He wrote to Kerr, enclosing a list of the films in his collection and offering to lend them. Kerr replied with a long letter, as Graff recalls, and they corresponded for a year. Late in 1968, they met for the first time, and after that they spent many afternoons discussing film at Bleeck's bar, also known as the Artists and Writers Club. Each time, Graff would end up walking as far as the Luxor Baths with Kerr, who customarily freshened up there before going on to the theatre. At that time, Kerr had begun preparing his illustrated study "The Silent Clowns," which contains, among other things, accounts of the work of Chaplin, Keaton, Lloyd, and Langdon, and briefer accounts of several others, whom he calls "demiclowns." Graff guided Kerr to collectors with suitable material, and also carried reels of film in from Brooklyn. Before curtain time on Broadway, somebody walking along one of the dimly lighted blocks between Eighth and Ninth Avenues in the Forties might have spotted the two exchanging reels from their car trunks.

One day, bound for an evening of avant-garde theatre being put on by a visiting director from Poland, Jerszy Grotowski, Kerr invited Graff along. Graff declined, thinking, he says, "This is what the man takes me to for the first time—a play in Polish, no less." Later, Kerr told Graff, "You missed Madge Evans—she was sitting next to me."

Graff realized that Kerr frequently went to the theatre alone, without his wife, the writer Jean Kerr. (Jean would explain that she didn't really like to go, because if she didn't like the play she didn't have the right to get up and leave.) Graff said to him, "One year I'm meeting with you. Why did it take you a whole year to ask me to go to the theatre with you? How could you let me walk with you to the Luxor Baths every time and that was it, and then say goodbye?"

According to Graff, Kerr replied, "I didn't want to lose you as a friend. I lost two children—they won't go to the theatre with me anymore. I take them, I buy them meals, and now when I say, 'Do you want to go to the theatre?' they say, 'Let's hear the title.' "

Graff recalls, "So I said to him, 'I give you my word I'll never walk out on you,' and for twenty years we went together."

GRAFF underwent a triple-bypass operation a few years ago in Maimonides Hospital, in Brooklyn. "When you're in a fine hospital, a learning hospital, a teaching hospital, they have up-to-date things," he says. "But they also have doctors, strangers, visiting you—touching you, *probing* you. You're like a guinea pig. So, maybe three days after I'd been operated on, six doctors walked in—one of them wearing a little skullcap, an Orthodox Jewish kid. And I'm still in pain, and the head guy picks up the bed chart and says to me, 'Herb Graff. That's a familiar name. Why do I know that name?' And I said, 'I haven't the vaguest idea.' He said, 'Are you famous?' I said, 'No, I'm not.' Then he said, 'I know where I know your name from. I know it from Isaac Asimov. Do you know Isaac Asimov?' I said, 'Yes, he's not only a dear friend—he's president of the Dutch Treat, a club I belong to. But how do you come to bring up his name?' He said, 'I did his bypass.' So I said, 'Fine, but if you did his bypass where do you know me?' He said, 'Because you came to visit him at University Hospital, and you used to call him and tell him jokes. Every time I came in, Asimov would say, "I just heard a new joke from Herb Graff." That's why I know your name.' Then he said to me, like this: 'You're in the motion-picture industry.' I was then in motion pictures; I'd given up the garment center. I said, 'Yes, I am.' And then he started to holler, 'How come they never make a movie about Brooklyn hospitals? How come it's always Manhattan? There's nothing wrong with Maimonides.' So I said to him, 'Listen, about two, three weeks ago, we had some actors who had come in to talk about doing a movie—John Cassavetes and Elaine May. And they were discussing about shooting a film in New York.' I said, 'If that comes to fruition, and there's a sequence in a hospital, I will do my utmost they should shoot the sequence in Brooklyn.' And the guy said thank you, and as he left, all the others left except the one wearing a skullcap. And he came over, and he bent over me, and he said, 'I do impersonations.' And I stared at him, and with this he started to do the worst Alfred Hitchcock I ever heard in my life. And he stood like Hitchcock,

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and he said, 'Good evening, gentlemen.' And I got angry, and I said to him, 'Are you out of your mind? This is what you're doing to me? I just came out of an operation. And besides that,' I said, 'your mother and father must have gone into hock, scrimped and saved, to send you to medical school. And you want to do impersonations. Frank Gorshin has to do dinner theatres. Rich Little—maybe he makes a living. But you! Are you crazy?' And he says to me, 'I also do Henry Fonda.' "

TWO men on the plane to Syracuse, on their way to the annual March convention of the Cinephiles, ended a brief argument about Hal Roach and began discussing a fellow film collector.

"He steals," one said. "Shh," said the other. "His brother's right behind you. Anyway, collectors don't steal film—they appropriate it."

The convention began early Thursday afternoon, ended early Sunday afternoon, and was attended by some five hundred members. Collectors, exhibitors, and dealers came from all over the world. The convention was held in one of a scattering of low, sprawling hotels that seemed to have been dropped at random into cleared acreage along a county highway on the edge of a suburban community five miles north of the city. Lawns, about an inch high from the last fall cutting, resembled browned Astroturf, with small patches of dirty snow along the edges. But none of that mattered to the Cinephiles, who, except for a meal now and then at a nearby restaurant, didn't venture outside all weekend.

Besides the regulars, there were people who drove out for the day from the city and from more distant towns. The affair's regular host, who is the local sheriff—and of whom it is rumored that he has jailed only one man, a drunk, during his four years in office, and then only because the fellow pleaded to be locked up for the night—reserves a hundred and fifty rooms for the film buffs in the main inn. (The place was chosen because a restaurant across the street is open around the clock.) The schedule, made up fairly evenly of silents and early sound films, is a full one: showings are held evenings, mornings, and afternoons. This year, forty-one movies—features and shorts—were shown, with relatively short lunch and dinner breaks. All but three were in 16 mm. and were shown at the hotel. The three others, in 35 mm., were shown in the Syracuse Civic Center on Saturday morning.

The longest of the three, "The Last of the Mohicans" (1920), on loan from Eastman House, was considered a special treat. Introducing it, William K. Everson, who, according to Graff, is the owner of what is probably the world's largest collection of old films, announced that although the movie had been around in 16 mm., it could be truly appreciated only in 35 mm. In it was a trim young Indian in war paint who mugged once at the heroine: he was later identified for some puzzled onlookers as the "Wallace Beery" announced in the flyer. But most of the audience seemed to get more enjoyment from a Tom Mix action comedy, "Soft Boiled," and snippets of a 1910 treatment of "The Wizard of Oz."

Cinephiles like any movie that has an unusual aspect. At this meeting, for instance, there was "Wild Girl," with Joan Bennett, Charles Farrell, and Ralph Bellamy: its main attraction for the Cinephiles lay in the opening credits, in which every player in the cast introduced himself or herself. Graff particularly admired a 1922 version of the Anthony Hope novel "The Prisoner of Zenda," in which Lewis Stone, wearing a Norfolk jacket and sporting a small beard, bore a remarkable resemblance to Ronald Colman in the famous 1937 version, and a well-made 1939 German film, "The Trip to Tilsit," whose leading man, Frits van Dongen, left Germany at a propitious time and turned up in Hollywood as Philip Dorn. Another curiosity was "The Great Hotel Murder" (1935): it lacked a dénouement, the climax having been inexplicably cut by the producer, Fox, before the film was released.

Standing up quite well were "Grand Slam" (1933), about a touring contract-bridge star, played by Paul Lukas; "The Mouthpiece" (1932), starring Warren William as an attorney, in a story that was lifted, without credit, from the Gene Fowler biography of Bill Fallon, called "The Great Mouthpiece"; "Looking for Trouble" (1934), a breezy Spencer Tracy–Jack Oakie comedy thriller about telephone linemen; and "Blood Money" (1933), the Saturday midnight showing, starring George Bancroft as a tricky bail bondsman and featuring Frances Dee as a nymphomaniac whose startling

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There were three dealers' rooms in the hotel, and all weekend visitors circled through them. The dealers sold books about both stage and screen figures; projectors; cassettes; and, of course, reels of film. The features were going for roughly a hundred and twenty-five dollars apiece. One long table holding reels also had, as an odd centerpiece, four linked brown passenger cars from a toy-train set. Graff laughed discreetly. "That, I don't know where it came from. It fell off a truck. What do I know?" The seller was a stocky, olive-skinned man in his sixties with silvery hair combed straight back.

"One time, when he was in Brooklyn, he called me and made a list of the different things—film—he had for sale," Graff said later. "And he must have been reading down one line too much, to the clothing. 'And I also got twenty suits,' he says, 'sizes 38 to 40, green herringbone.' And when I went to pick up the films I'd selected—and I've bought plenty of stuff from this guy in my lifetime—he had a rack and all the suits, and two or three guys were trying them on. He sells projector bulbs. That was his forte. Nobody else had his cheap prices. Other people were paying, say, twelve dollars wholesale and selling them for sixteen dollars. He was selling them for eight dollars or six dollars. I used to buy a box at a time, twelve bulbs, five dollars each."

One of the dealers' rooms was devoted entirely to "paper," which is to say large posters, some hand-painted; lobby cards; and eight-by-ten stills. "Paper" is especially valuable, multiplying in price from year to year.

"The dealers?" Graff says. "Sometimes they do well, sometimes they don't. It's according. Everson did sensational. He made up a list of things he had to sell. I never sell—I only buy. You saw the lists on the bulletin boards? Everybody wheels and deals. Everson gives very fair prices, very inexpensive. But this time he not only listed fair prices but put down a bunch of pictures and said bid. They do that, too. He did much better with the bids. People bid more than he was going to set down. He was going to sell a picture for a hundred dollars, and somebody bid a hundred and fifty dollars."

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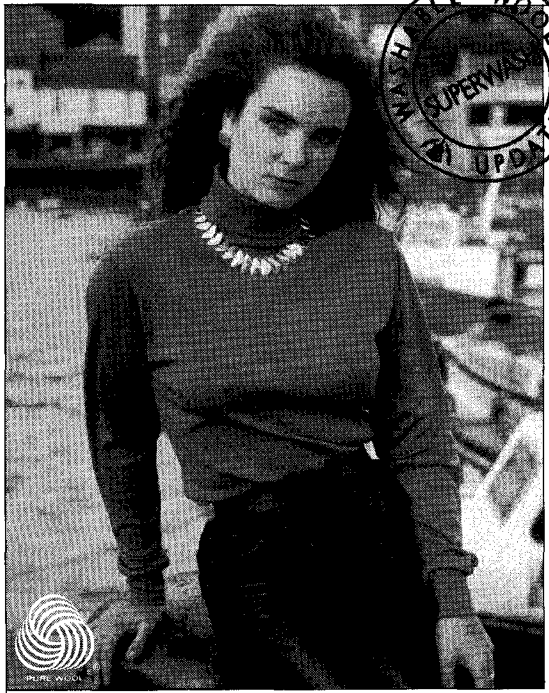

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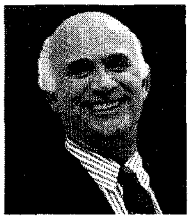

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an Australian who said he operated movie houses in Sydney and Melbourne. Of him Graff said, "This is conjecture. I would guess that this guy pays rentals, but once every two weeks he puts in one of these movies that he bought outright and doesn't pay a rental. Who's to know? When Jack Valenti had the F.B.I. come after the collectors, they were interested only in the brand-new stuff. They couldn't care less if you owned a picture that was fifty years old if you were a collector. But there are crooks. There's a big difference between a guy who is a collector and buys a picture for his own benefit and somebody who takes a brand-new film and sells it. Let's say M-G-M gives an order to a lab to make up twenty prints of 'Gone With the Wind.' This guy makes twenty-two prints in case one goes bad. All twenty-two come out gold, so now he has two extra prints, so he sells them to private people. They keep them for themselves. Another thing that happens is when the film company orders a print destroyed because it's been shown too many times. But instead of destroying it somebody sells it.

"John Lodge came to speak once at the Dutch Treat Club. So I walked over to him after he spoke, and I said I had a print of 'The Scarlet Empress,' with him and Marlene Dietrich. And he said, 'So do I. When I was an ambassador, Jack Valenti came to visit me and made me a new print.' Now, this is Valenti. He's the one who put the F.B.I. on everybody."

Graff's son Michael, twenty-nine, who is an auto mechanic for the New York City Department of Sanitation, had come to Syracuse with him. "I'm not sure where my father is," Michael said on Saturday afternoon, looking around the bar. "Just listen for the loudest voice." Sure enough, there was Graff, seated at a table, his back to the window. Wearing a dark-blue suit, no tie, and a cap, he was talking to a small group of people who had gathered around him. A movie was being shown in the screening room, but he was choosy, and what he enjoyed greatly about these meetings, he had said, was the "camaraderie." Now he leaned forward as a tall, elderly, cheerful, and distinguished-looking man, drink in hand, lurched over to the table from the bar. The man spoke a few friendly words and then sprawled lengthwise on the floor. His glass, unbroken, lay a few feet from his head.

"And you know," Graff remarked with some awe, "that man was once Louise Brooks' lover!"

—Douglas Watt

• •

SIX NAPS IN ONE DAY

1.
In the nap there are numerous doors, boudoirs, a talking hall
of sisters who gesture underwater, and bricked-up memoirs
with closets inside. There are bikes and desks in the nap,
2.
corridors of glory, water, and pots of ivy hooked to ceiling
or ocean floor. Apes play with papers on the busy desk
I swim up to, through laborious sleep water. Rex the butcher
3.
wears a straw hat sleeping on sawdust. When the extinguished
U-boat, flapping batwings, settles under millennial silt,
whose eyes gleam through the periscope? They are Regina's.
4.
Two squadrons of black biplanes dogfight over the trenches
of 1917, death's-heads graven on engine cowlings,
helmeted pilots' faces turned into skulls, and their bones
5.
as shadowy blue as underwater feet in the shoe-store X-ray.
The gibbon's cry hobbles on the wooded shore, like the cry
of this bed. He walks by the ocean's tide a thousand years
6.
in his gown of claws and hair, a deposed king searching
for sleep's bosom and the tall queen of dunes: Regina
skulks hiding in salt grass—while the halt gibbon howls.

—Donald Hall

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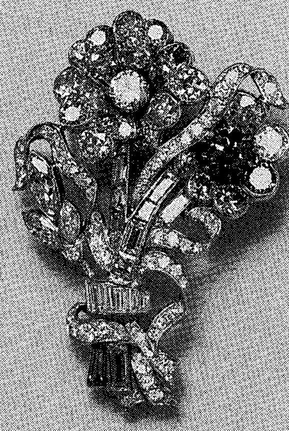

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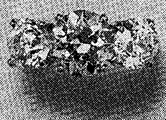

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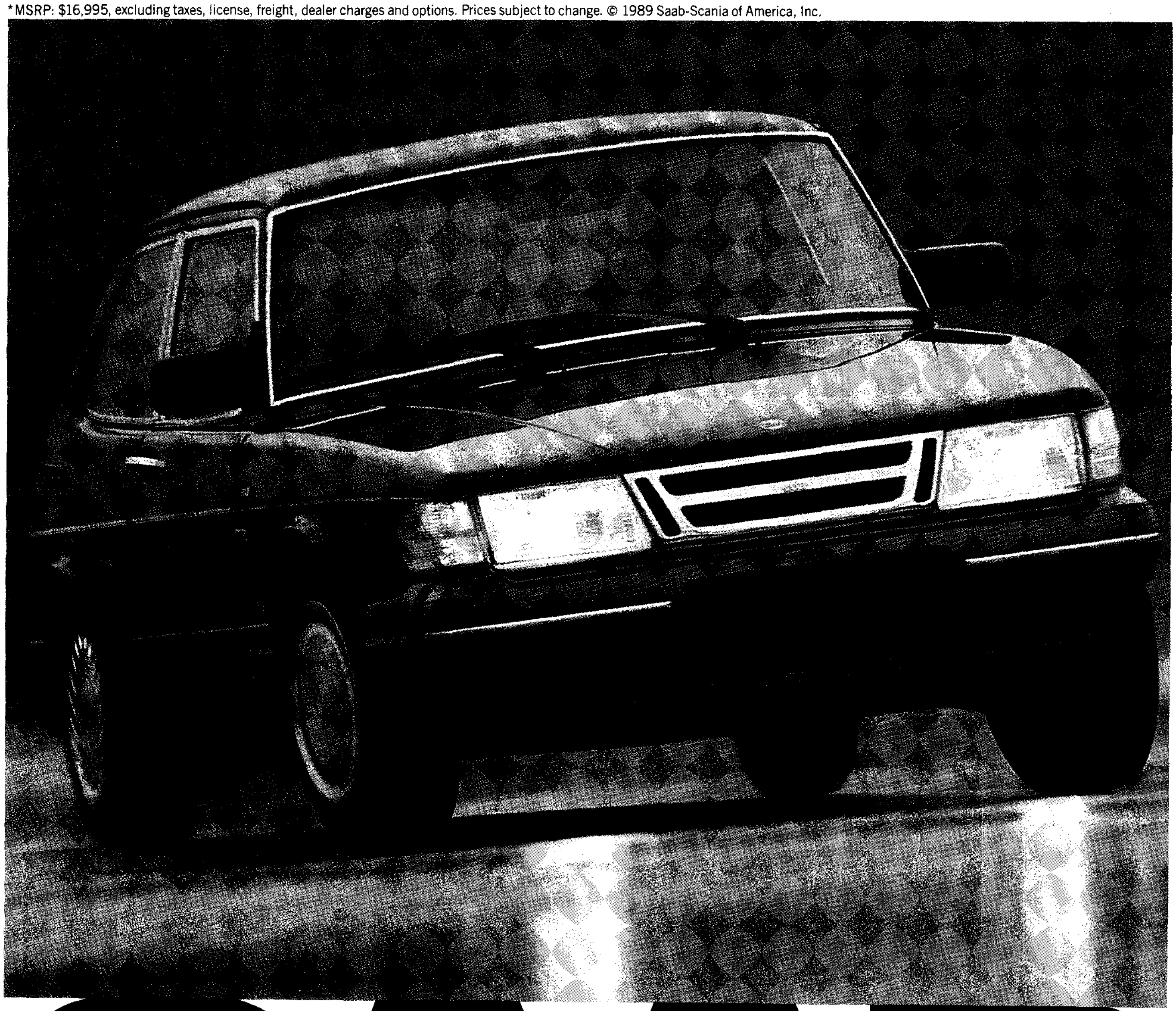

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LETTER FROM BUDAPEST

When Hungarian Communists opened their party congress, on October 6th, Otto von Habsburg, who is the seventy-seven-year-old son of Charles IV, Austria-Hungary's last monarch, happened to be visiting Budapest. The visit was a nice coincidence. The Communists were formally approving the conversion of Hungary into a multiparty democracy, and one of the dozen or so opposition parties that had emerged was suggesting that Habsburg, who lives in West Germany, might run for President in early January and return the country to the stature it enjoyed before the First World War. A respected member of the European Parliament, Habsburg speaks Hungarian and holds Hungarian, Austrian, and West German citizenship. Although he would probably win, he declined to be a candidate, much to the relief of those Hungarians who worry that their newly democratic politics are being dominated by what they call "nostalgia parties," which see the distant past as preferable to the uncertain future.

Uncertainty shapes the mood of Budapest these days. The city is steeped in skepticism and soured by a distaste for politics. From the remote perspective of New York or Washington, it may seem odd that people moving decisively from Communist authoritarianism to pluralistic democracy should be anything but exhilarated. President George Bush's speechwriters evidently assumed the best when they had him say during his visit to Budapest, in July, "I see people in motion. I see color, creativity, experimentation. The very atmosphere of Budapest is electric, alive with optimism." But the description fits the American imagination better than it does the Hungarian reality. The rare Hungarian who pronounces himself an optimist does so with a resounding lack of conviction and a number of caveats.

This is because Hungary now stands between the uprooted politics of the Communists, who reconstituted themselves as Socialists at their congress, and the seedlings of the new political parties, which have not yet put down roots among the populace. The Communists—the Socialists—are expected to win no more than fifteen to thirty per cent of the seats in a parliament to be elected next spring, and so will have to share power with some vague opposition whose programs and personalities remain sketchy. Labels have changed, ideology has blurred, the word "democrat" seems to have entered the names of most parties, and there is scrambling over ideas about moving toward a market economy. But Hungarians have no social movement akin to Poland's Solidarity; the political vacuum has not been filled even by the robust diversity of opinion that has been tolerated in Hungary more extensively during the last fifteen years than elsewhere among the Warsaw Pact nations.

Instead, there is a diffuse sense of national pride—a search for an ill-defined "Hungarianness"—that runs through much of the rhetoric. This translates into specific actions and the telling of truths. The border with Austria has been opened, allowing East German vacationers to flee to the West. The country's name has been changed from the Hungarian People's Republic to the Republic of Hungary. Atop the dome of the huge parliament building, with its neo-Gothic flèches and rococo carvings, the red star is no longer lit at night; it is to come down in a few months. And the failed revolution of 1956, which was crushed by Soviet tanks and troops, can finally be discussed and commemorated. Its leading martyr, former Prime Minister Imre Nagy, who was executed secretly in 1958 and buried face down in an unmarked grave, was re-interred and given a public funeral in June. On October 23rd, the anniversary of the revolt, a hundred thousand people assembled outside parliament to chant "Russians go home!" and "Gorby! Gorby!"

Superficially, Hungary appears to have left the Communist world already. It has casinos and pornography, private shops and risqué night clubs, a growing assortment of independent magazines and newspapers, and practically no limits on what can be said. It is not a country of raw passions, however—especially not about politics. By and large, there is a public style of courtliness, an ethic of civility, that leads politicians to take personal offense when they are criticized. Some Hungarians believe that this vestige of Middle European tradition will have to change if they are to learn how to conduct democratic debates.

APPROACHING THE MILLENNIUM
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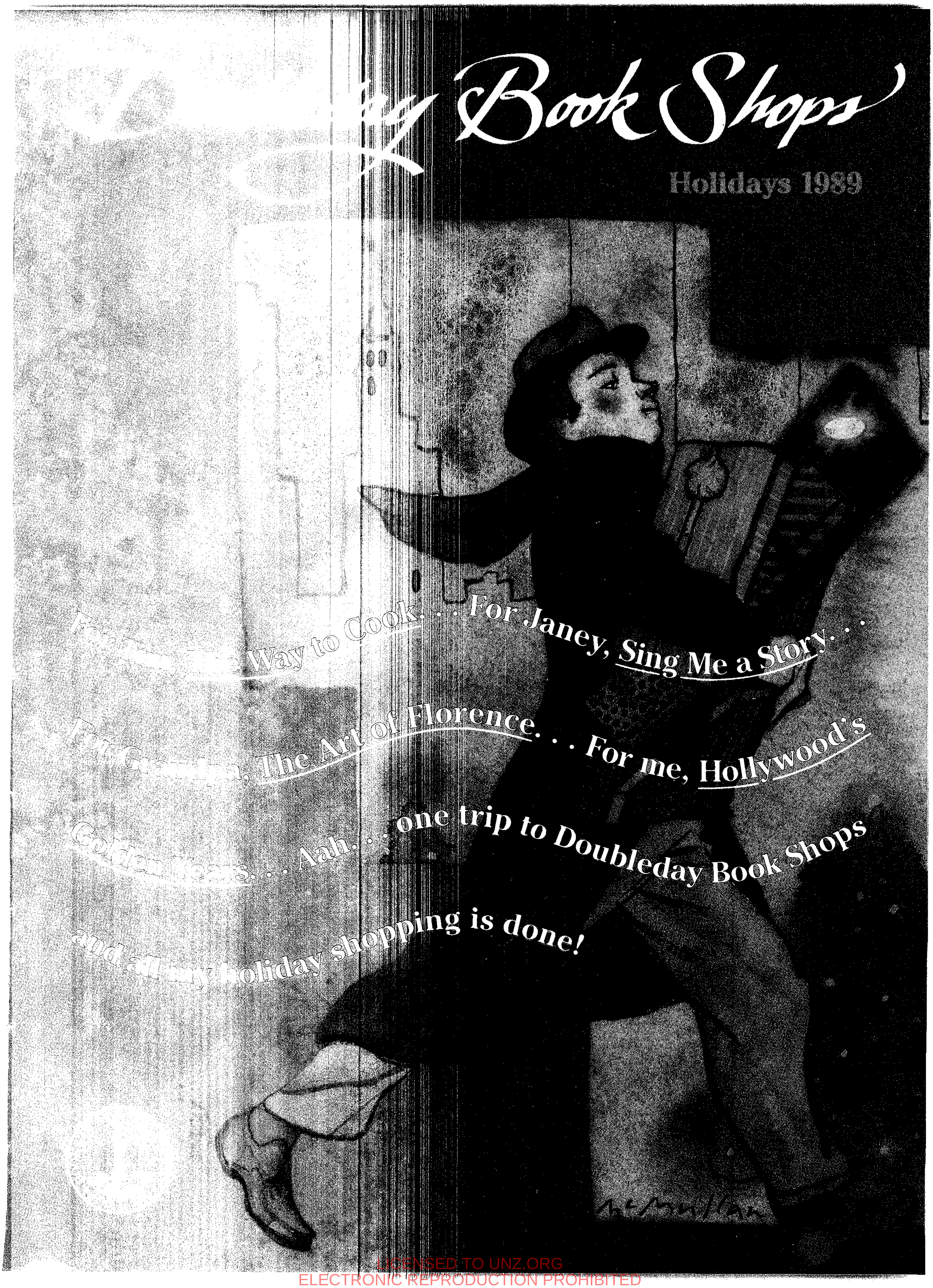
Stuart Leeds

Outside the milieu of politics, the texture of concerns seems rather differ-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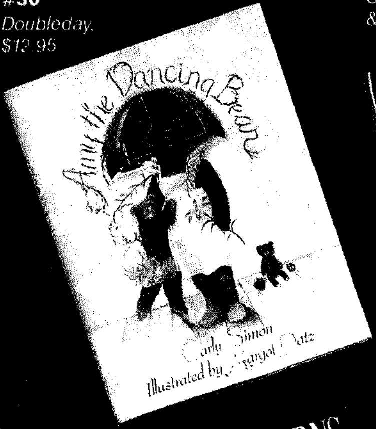
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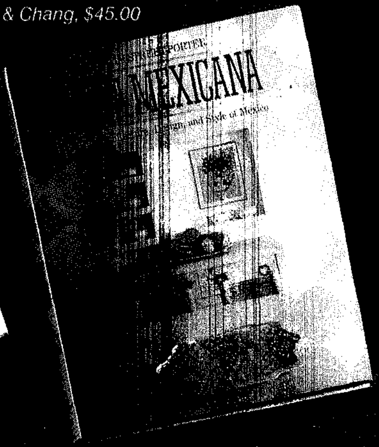

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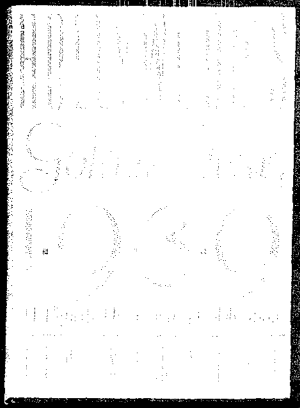

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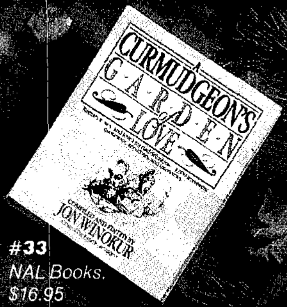
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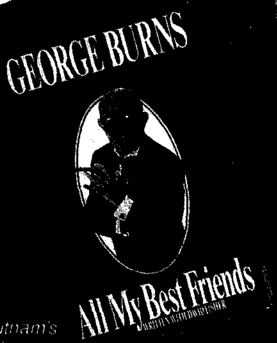
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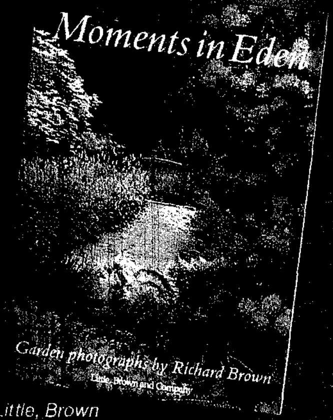
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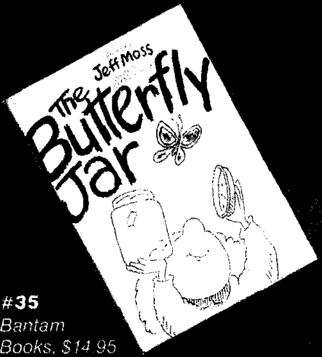
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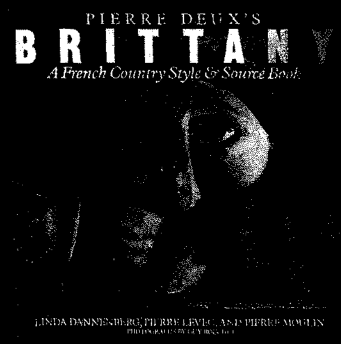
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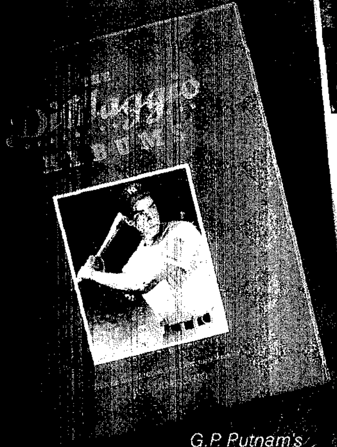
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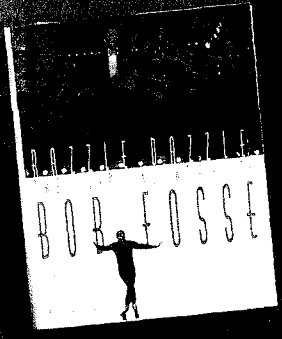

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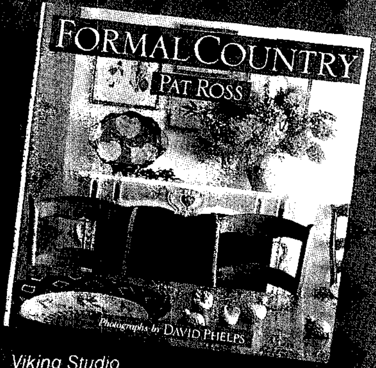
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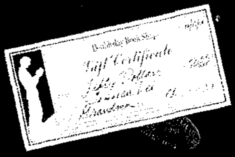
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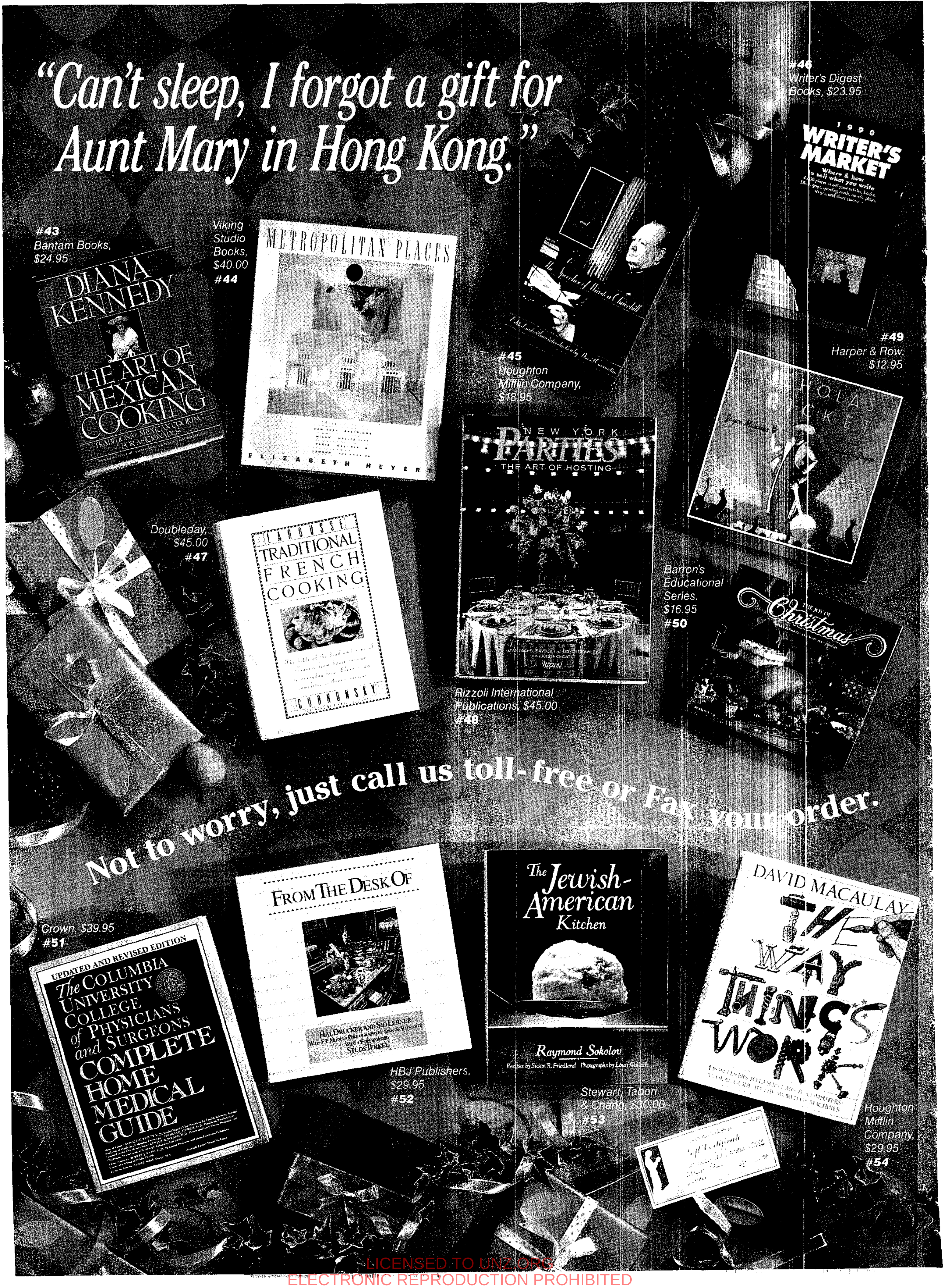

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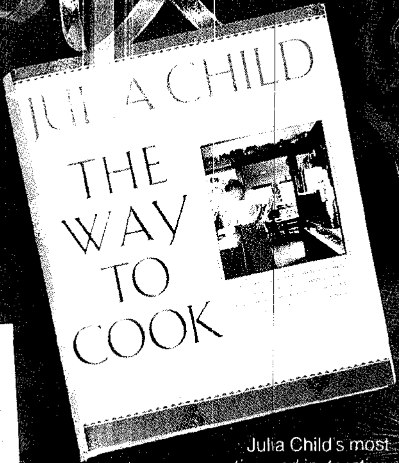
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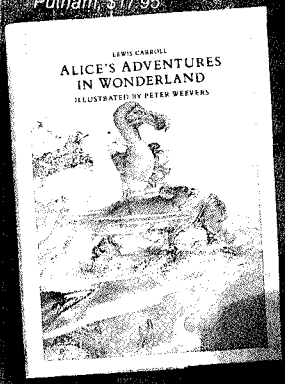
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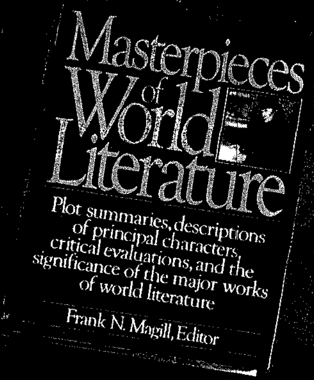
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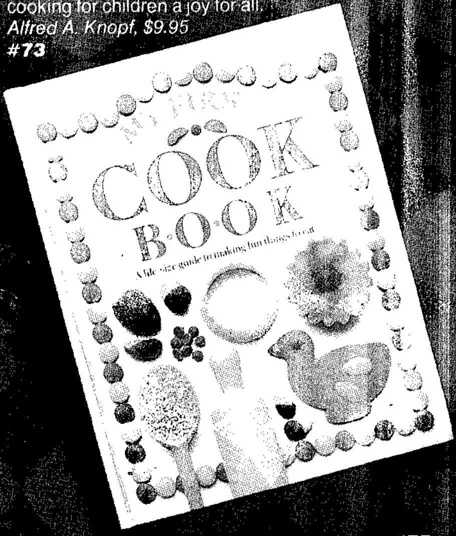
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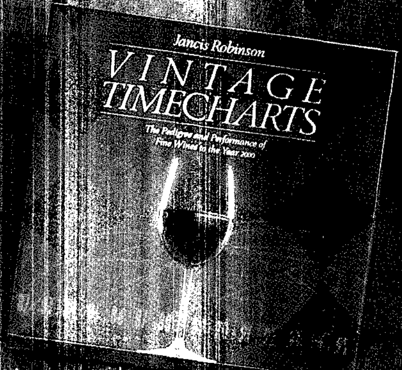
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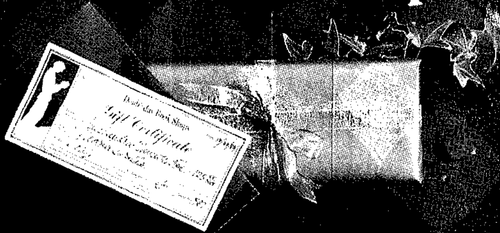
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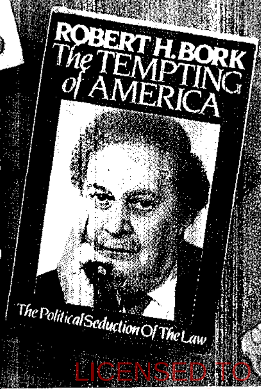
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ent. One evening after the Party congress, a medical student, Gábor Xantus, gathered a few of his friends together to talk with me at what he called his "favorite pub." It was a modern, brightly lit bar that served good, cold draft beer in big glass mugs to an under-thirty clientele—students and young professionals, mostly. I wanted to talk about politics, and they emphatically did not. "I'm fed up with politics," said Gábor Miklosi, who works in a photography lab. He took a sip of beer and told us how, on the first day of the congress, he had almost fainted when he saw a huge statue of Stalin in a city square. It turned out to have been made of paper and spray-painted by a Hungarian film company to look like a bronze statue of Stalin that had been toppled by revolutionaries in 1956. It was to be torn down for a scene in a movie.

What preoccupied these young people was their declining standard of living—the squeeze between rising prices and low wages. They complained about the high cost of books and opera tickets, the virtual impossibility of buying an automobile, the growing rate of inflation (now approaching twenty per cent a year), and the need to take second jobs and work more hours. Xantus, who is twenty-one, sustains himself as he studies medicine by working as an interpreter (he did so for me) and by cleaning offices at night. One of his friends, Gabriella Fehér, is a biologist with blond curly hair and rosy cheeks. "My salary is six thousand four hundred forints a month," she said. "It is not enough." That's about a hundred and ten dollars. She supplements it by tutoring students on weekends. "If I teach ten hours a week for a month, I get four thousand forints," she said. "But a pair of shoes costs three thousand forints, jeans cost two thousand. A book is two hundred."

"Which book?" Xantus asked. "I wanted a book on acupuncture, and it cost four hundred and sixty forints."

From the end of the table, an electrical engineer named Mitkó Naderi said, "It is not socialism, because there are no cheap tickets, no cheap food. And it is not capitalism, because there are no good salaries."

Late in the afternoon of the fourth, and final, day of the Party congress, I tried, quite unscientifically, to take the measure of people's political attitudes. On a busy downtown block of the Pest

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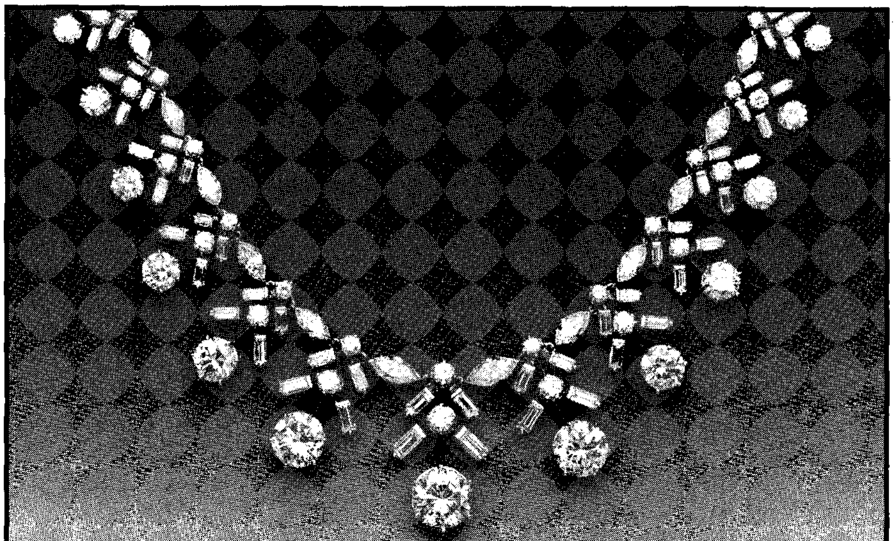

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section of Budapest, I stood outside a subway station with Xantus and buttonholed people for some old-fashioned man-in-the-street interviews. The congress had been major news, of course. The Party's twelve hundred and fifty-six delegates, who had been elected democratically by the rank and file, had gathered in a modern concert hall and convention center in the Buda section. One after another, they had risen to denounce their own organization as a "state party" and their country as a "party state," in which power had been monopolized for more than forty years. "Europe" was the code word for enlightenment, honor, and morality. Delegates had spoken of becoming a socialist party in the Western European style—"to turn our party into a democratic party, which will no longer tolerate authoritarian means," in the words of Prime Minister Miklós Németh, "to make our party the cleanest of all the Hungarian parties, so that we will not be ashamed in Europe." A major purpose was to spruce up the Party's image now that it would have to compete in free elections. To that end, on the second day eighty per cent of the delegates had raised red cards in their hands to vote to dissolve their party—formally named the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party—and re-create it as the Hungarian Socialist Party.

Most of the people in my subway sample were not impressed by the events at the congress. About half seemed devoutly apathetic, as if they had come to the considered conclusion that they should be entirely indifferent to politics. "I didn't pay any attention to the Party congress," a young fellow wearing dark glasses declared with conviction.

A blond woman said definitively, "I have no opinion."

A few others brushed past us, shrugging. Xantus shook his head sadly, but said he was not surprised; some of his friends also dismissed politics as unsavory. Just the word "party" had negative connotations.

"I don't deal with this stuff," a thin, sixty-year-old bricklayer told us. "I deal only with my work. I don't deal with such mumbo-jumbo. I'm not concerned with this stuff at all, because I'm interested only in my salary. If I get my money after my work, I don't care about the system."

We stopped two men who were

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walking together. One was tall, with a black mustache. The other, a head shorter, wore a scraggly beard, round eyeglasses, and long hair tied back in a dishevelled ponytail. The shorter one said he doubted whether the Party would be any different just because it was now called the Socialist Party.

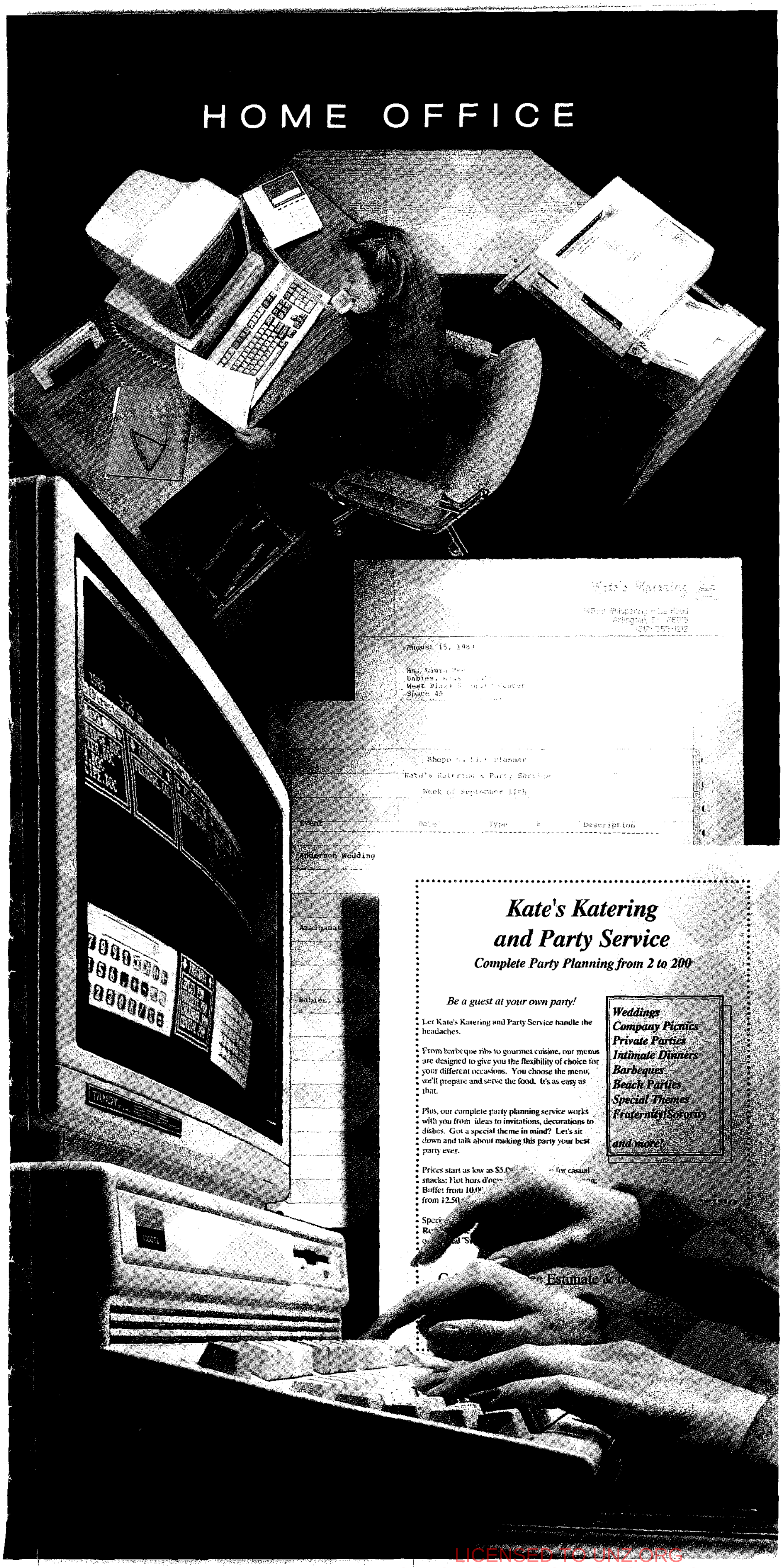
"They changed the name?" his companion said, with a whoop. He hadn't heard about it until this moment, and he laughed the long, merry laugh of a man delighted by an absurdity.

Almost all those who had followed the congress questioned the sincerity of the Party reformers. "It's as if you shaved off Lenin's beard and gave him a toupee," said a professional choral singer named Ambrus Ákos. He grinned mischievously.

"I'm afraid that no party knows what it wants, really," said Gabriella Juhász, a dark-haired young woman who works as a cashier at Malév, the Hungarian airline. "All the political parties are kind of similar to one another."

A few people had hoped for a split among the Communists, with the radical reformers going in one direction and the moderate conservatives forming a separate movement. (Some reformers had hoped for this as well, to crystallize their identity as non-Communist.) Instead, the reformers and the moderates debated, and then papered over their differences in a closed session, compromised on a platform, and kept most of the Party intact. This caused some confusion on the street. "The whole congress was a process of arguing and quarrelling," an elderly man grumbled. "I don't know whom to vote for."

POLITICAL confusion is understandable; the parties in Hungary are a mixed lot of socialists, Western democrats, and throwbacks to the nineteenth century. One group has revived the prewar Smallholders Party, which was once popular but now seems anachronistic, or even utopian: some of its members had proposed Habsburg's candidacy, and the Party's General Secretary, István Prepeliczay, told me that he wanted to return all confiscated land to its prewar owners, leave the Warsaw Pact, reduce the central government to a tiny entity, reëstablish private property as "a driving force in society," and regain national autono-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my. "We are between two millstones, the Germans and the Slavs, and they're grinding and grinding and grinding," he said.

Another group has reëstablished the prewar Social Democratic Party, which reflects a widespread desire among Hungarians to move away from the centrally planned economy that has worked so poorly. "Our model, economically, is something like the Austrian and Swedish models," said György Ruttner, a thirty-four-year-old lawyer, who was a member of the Party's executive board at the time we talked. "Let the rules of the market operate," he declared. "But, at the same time, there are many poor people, so the state must guarantee a living for everyone." Ruttner belonged to the Communist Party until last January, and now that he is playing real politics he realizes how much damage the one-party system did. "It killed the political culture in this country," he said. "To form political organizations and to have a political culture will take years, maybe decades." As an illustration of the point, the Social Democrats have just split, following a factional struggle in which Ruttner was accused of trying to weaken the party. He has now joined a breakaway group, the Independent Social Democratic Party.

Before the congress began, I made an appointment at the "White House," as Hungarians sardonically call the headquarters of the Communist Party's Central Committee. The cabdriver whom I asked to take me there snorted and said, half in English, half in German, "Not white. Black." Budapest is a city of striking vistas: of domes and spires; of elaborate ornamentation; and of quaint, medieval-style houses, many of which were rebuilt after the Second World War. The hilly Buda section, with the imposing remains of a medieval castle, is divided from Pest, the commercial and governmental quarter, by the broad, muddy-blue sweep of the Danube, which is crossed by graceful bridges. At night, the most exquisite buildings and bridges are lit as softly as those in Paris. But the White House, which is on the east bank of the river and is reached from Buda by the Margit Bridge, is plain, dirty white, and block-shaped, and its right angles clash with the arches and turrets of the city.

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General Secretary Károly Grósz, was modest and functional, with simple wooden furniture and cream-colored wallpaper. Földesi, who had spent a total of twelve years as a Hungarian diplomat in South Vietnam, England, Spain, and the United States, deftly parried my questions about the Soviet role in Hungary's liberalization. Of course, he said, these events take place in a broad East-West context. "The ferment in 1956 started after the Twentieth Party Congress," he recalled, referring to the Soviet Communist Party congress at which Nikita Khrushchev delivered his "secret speech" denouncing Stalin. After the East-West tension that followed the Soviet Union's 1979 invasion of Afghanistan began to ease, Földesi continued, "we developed further relations with the West, because we had the necessary sensors to feel the coming tremors"—by which he apparently meant the upheaval of openness encouraged by Mikhail Gorbachev.

I asked him how much checking with Gorbachev the Hungarian leadership had done on its way to a multiparty democracy. Were green lights given explicitly by Moscow?

"It doesn't go like that," Földesi said. And that was all he would say. But he—and others I spoke with, later—indicated that it was partly to reassure Moscow of a smooth transition that the Party insisted on the creation of a strong Presidency, to be filled quickly by elections, before the full-fledged parliamentary campaign next year. The electoral procedures and the changes in the structure of government were negotiated over the summer by the Hungarian Communists and their opposition, and were codified in October by the current parliament, in the form of statutes and constitutional amendments, pending the writing of an entirely new constitution, complete with separation of powers and a bill of rights, which is planned within the next year or two.

I asked Földesi what he wanted the Party to do at the congress, and what would have to happen for it to survive in a competitive political system.

"First, I do not see anything wrong with getting rid of the monopoly of power," he said. "Second, this is not a Communist Party. It has always been a mixture of Communists and social democrats. I believe it will be a left-wing socialist party. The Party must not be seen as the trade union of the privileged."

When I raised the question of Hungarian nationalism, Földesi replied with a short history lesson on the dismemberment of Hungary—a lesson I was to hear from nearly everyone I interviewed. Under the Treaty of Trianon, which Hungary was forced to sign after the First World War, large regions of the country, with their Hungarian populations, were carved away and given to Rumania, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. Hungary's area dropped from 125,641 square miles to 35,893, and its population from nearly twenty-one million to seven million six hundred thousand. The bitterness generated by these changes is kept alive by the fact that two million Hungarians who live today under Rumanian control in Transylvania face considerable oppression and poverty. The resulting hostility between Hungary and Rumania is being expressed openly now that Moscow has relaxed its grip and stopped enforcing the false spirit of socialist brotherhood that once ruled the region. All this, combined with the more recent history of Soviet domination, has brought about a surge of yearning to reclaim what was truly and purely "Hungarian"—to rid Hungary of alien influences. Increasingly, people are talking about "*real* Hungarians," as opposed to Jewish Hungarians, who are stereotyped negatively as being prominent at each end of the political spectrum—in the Communist hierarchy at one end, or in one of the most radical opposition parties, the Alliance of Free Democrats, at the other. "When liberalization began, when the sluice gates went up, it was not pure water that rushed out," Földesi told me. "It was rather murky. There is anti-Semitism, anti-Communism. So far, it hasn't reached the boiling point. There have been skirmishes on paper. The Jewish community is complaining about some desecration of its cemeteries."

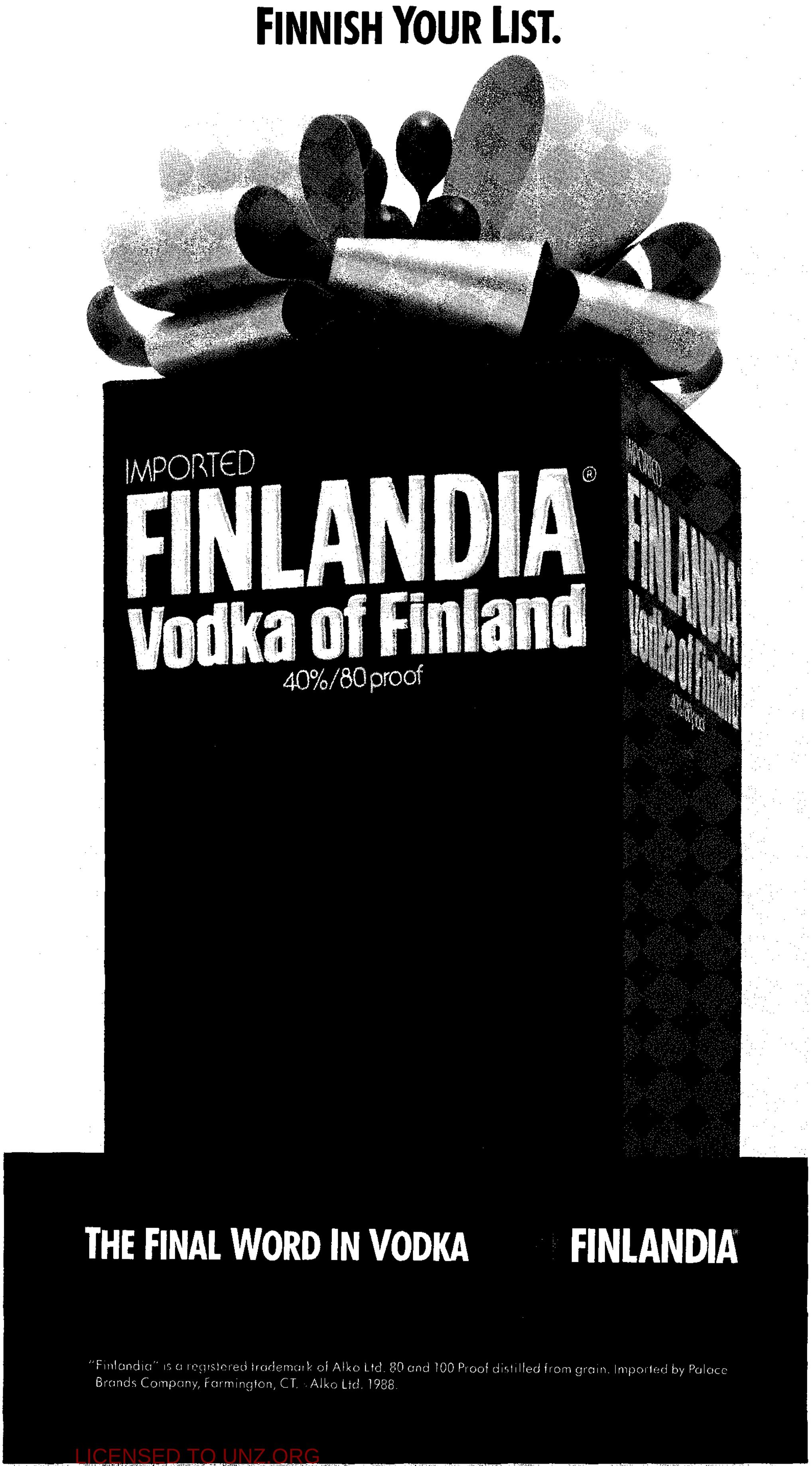
As many Hungarians hasten to explain, nationalist impulses may be exaggerated today because they were suppressed for more than forty years. Now that people can freely advocate national independence—by which they mean independence from Soviet domination

—nationalism has grown into a vehicle for contradictory ideas. Even as it drives the country toward political pluralism, it stirs up dark instincts of intolerance; even as it sets a course toward a free-market economy, it searches for scapegoats. The political parties are still too nebulous for anyone to tell whether the unattractive side of nationalism will remain just an undercurrent in the political campaign, as seems most likely, or be translated into explicit platforms and policies. Still, some distinguished Hungarians express concern. One is Iván T. Berend, an economic historian, who is the president of the Academy of Sciences and was a member of the Central Committee until it was abolished at the Party congress. He is also Jewish, and he has sensed the whiff of anti-Semitism in the air, although, he said, he was not aware of having been a target himself.

Berend received me in a huge office at the academy, a massive neo-Renaissance palace as ornate as a cathedral. Two crystal chandeliers hung from the ceiling; a large potted palm stood near his desk. We sat in easy chairs at a handsomely inlaid wooden table. He is a thin man with a neatly trimmed gray goatee, and he speaks fluent English. "Anti-Semitism is strong in the Democratic Forum, although now they are very cautious in expressing it," he said, referring to the largest opposition party. He made it clear that he was not indicting the entire Forum but only a populist wing, dominated by nationalists. "They are counting the Jews in leading positions, they are counting the Jews in the mass media, and are saying they are destroying Hungarian culture. They use the word 'cosmopolitan.' "

I observed that the term was used by Stalin to stigmatize Soviet Jews. "Yes," Berend said. "It was a taboo before. The word 'Jew' was not openly mentioned. I should not say it is a decisive issue now, but it is penetrating the whole political atmosphere."

Unlike Poland, which had Solidarity to confront the Communists and force liberalization, Hungary has been led toward democracy by the Communists themselves, including some who have left the Party and joined the opposition, some who have stayed in the Party but have not seemed comfortable with its Soviet-style authoritarianism, and a fair share of opportunists who have suddenly become "reformers." I asked Berend how Hungary's Communist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Party had come to permit a transition to democracy.

"Nobody understands it," he remarked, with a smile, and then tried to explain. The last fifteen years saw a "slow but gradual erosion" under János Kádár, who took over as Party chief after Soviet tanks put down the 1956 revolution. "Economic problems were not resolved, actions were delayed, living standards started to decline." Inflation also became serious, he noted. "The Party and the government were unable to solve the problems. All basic actions were delayed. Slowly, the Party intellectuals, even part of the apparatus, started to revolt against the leaders, arguing that they would destroy the country." Despite economic reforms in 1968 and thereafter, which permitted a modicum of private enterprise, "this monolithic political structure" prevented resolution of the economic problems, Berend said. "We have to destroy it. We have to change it. We wanted to initiate reforms, and the limitation was always the Soviet Union. When Gorbachev opened the door and the Kádár regime didn't react properly, didn't want to explore the possibilities in '86, '87, the reform wing started to attack the leadership."

THE reform wing did not win a complete victory at the Party congress, but it came close. Young liberals had set the stage by ousting Kádár as General Secretary in May of 1988; he died last July, at the age of seventy-seven. He was first replaced by Grósz as General Secretary; then, in June of 1989, by a temporary four-man presidium: Pozsgay, Grósz, Németh, and a skillful sixty-six-year-old politician named Rezsö Nyers, who had been in the Social Democratic Party when the Soviets forced it to merge with the Communist Party, in 1948. At the time, Nyers was part of a faction that accepted the merger, and he displayed some of the same instinct for conciliation now, maneuvering reformers into a compromise that avoided a split in the Party but blurred its identity.

The congress had none of the usual trappings of Communist gatherings. There were no Lenin portraits or quotations, no red banners or red stars, no hammers and sickles. Instead, three words in white letters stood out starkly against a wooden backdrop at the front of the hall: "DEMOCRACY, LEGALITY, SOCIALISM!" No representatives of other Communist Parties were invited to attend. The Party leaders sat in the audience rather than onstage. Only three per cent of the delegates were workers. Speakers rarely mentioned Marxism-Leninism except pejoratively ("It was an invention of Stalin," one said), and they addressed their audience as "comrades" infrequently, denounced the country's economic crisis and stagnation, cited Western Europe (never the Soviet Union) as a model, and condemned their own party as having reached a "historical dead end," as several delegates declared.

Some reformers, including aides to Pozsgay, actually wanted the Party to split, reasoning that the result would be clearer if the liberals left the conservatives categorically behind. On the first night, an appeal for such an outcome brought the congress its most dramatic moment. Imre Keserü, a gangly delegate in shirtsleeves, leaned over a battery of six microphones on the lectern and raised his voice to a pitch of righ-

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teousness. "In this room, there is the editor of a journal that was banned in 1986, and also the man who did the banning," he declared. The delegates were riveted to their seats, all eyes on Keserü. Most of them knew the case: an irreverent political journal, *Tiszatáj*, edited by József Annus, had been banned by János Berecz, then the Party Secretary for Ideology. "How can they be in the same party?" Keserü asked. "Let's not get involved in small compromises. If there are false compromises, there will be no future for the left in this country—never." It had the ring of an omen, and the congress erupted into rhythmic applause that went on and on.

The next morning, another reformer picked up the argument, implying that conservatives should be expelled. "The Party cannot contain itself and the opposition at the same time," he said, adding this consolation: "It is not expulsion from paradise. Our party has not been paradise for some time."

Conservatives urged unity. "Some people find it difficult to show tolerance," Károly Grósz said. "They try to exclude other members. It is no more than the old Stalinist approach—no matter that it is coated with a brand-new label of reform. It is necessary to strengthen political coherence, and not continue the Stalinist practice in which those who are closest to us are our worst enemies." In the end, although Grósz and Berecz and other hard-liners were relegated to the periphery, they were not expelled.

That was not the way Imre Pozsgay seemed to want it on the second day of the congress, when he held a press conference. He is a stout man with deep circles under his eyes and, frequently, a grave expression on his broad face. Because of his liberalism, he is sometimes referred to as Hungary's Gorbachev, but he has none of the Soviet leader's personal magnetism or gift for bold phrases. Pozsgay spoke circuitously, saying of unnamed conservatives, "Nobody is forced to be a member. . . . They may make their own decisions on whether to continue or not." He appeared to mean that he would welcome the resignation or expulsion of the hard-liners. Asked by a Soviet journalist what the differences would be between the new Hungarian Socialist Party and the Soviet Communist Party, Pozsgay replied, diplomati-

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cally, "The political program of democratic socialism as it has been worked out does not consider socialism a purpose to be attained. It considers socialism the order of European values. It is not an abstract cause toward which a leading force of some kind guides the society. This approach has proved to be unsuccessful in Hungary." He also listed slogans and concepts that were no longer acceptable, among them "the dictatorship of the proletariat," and "democratic centralism." Two days later, the Party newspaper, *Nepszabadsag* (or "People's Freedom"), removed from its masthead the slogan "Workers of the World, Unite."

Issues of both political power and economic ideology divided the Party's factions. Delegates had strikingly different ideas about how much private enterprise should be allowed and how much the state should intervene to protect citizens from economic hardship. The reformers who leaned toward Sweden and Austria as models of minimal socialism spoke of joining the Socialist International, while the moderates wanted to keep extensive government ownership and regulation. "There are liberal illusions regarding a market economy that are not acceptable to us," one moderate conservative said. "We think the market has to be controlled from the top and the bottom as well." Certain ethical elements of Communist ideology should be retained, he said. "There should be justice in society, equal opportunity in society, solidarity in keeping with Marx's ideas where these ideas are linked with humanism." In the interest of avoiding a split, however, the congress fudged these disagreements and adopted a muddy formula calling for "a social market economy based on mixed ownership." During the debate, one delegate asked what that meant. He never got an answer.

The conflict over political power centered on a demand by opposition groups that the Party withdraw its cells from factories, offices, and other workplaces—a presence that has been integral to the authority of this and other Communist Parties. Reformers wanted to dissolve the "state party" apparatus by getting it out of the workplace. The moderates and the conservatives resisted. Rezsö Nyers, citing his roots as a socialist in the style of the nineteen-thirties, said he could not bring himself to abandon such a touchstone of his ideology. He asked the assembled delegates why, when Social Democrats had been permitted to organize in the workplace before the Second World War, the new Socialist Party should bar itself from doing so now. Much to the distress of the reformers, he engineered a compromise, in which Party cells would be free to withdraw if they wished. That prompted a young delegate to warn his colleagues, "My constituents asked me to be sure that the congress does not create a situation described by the Transylvanian saying 'The wolf changes its fur from season to season, but the character of the wolf remains the same.' "

On the third day of the congress, one of the reformers, Deputy Prime Minister Péter Medgyessy, held a news conference to register his unhappiness. "I am not convinced that the purification that was needed has actually happened," he said. "I am not sure that the compromise is convincing enough. We should make those issues sharper, more definite, to point out whether this party is a

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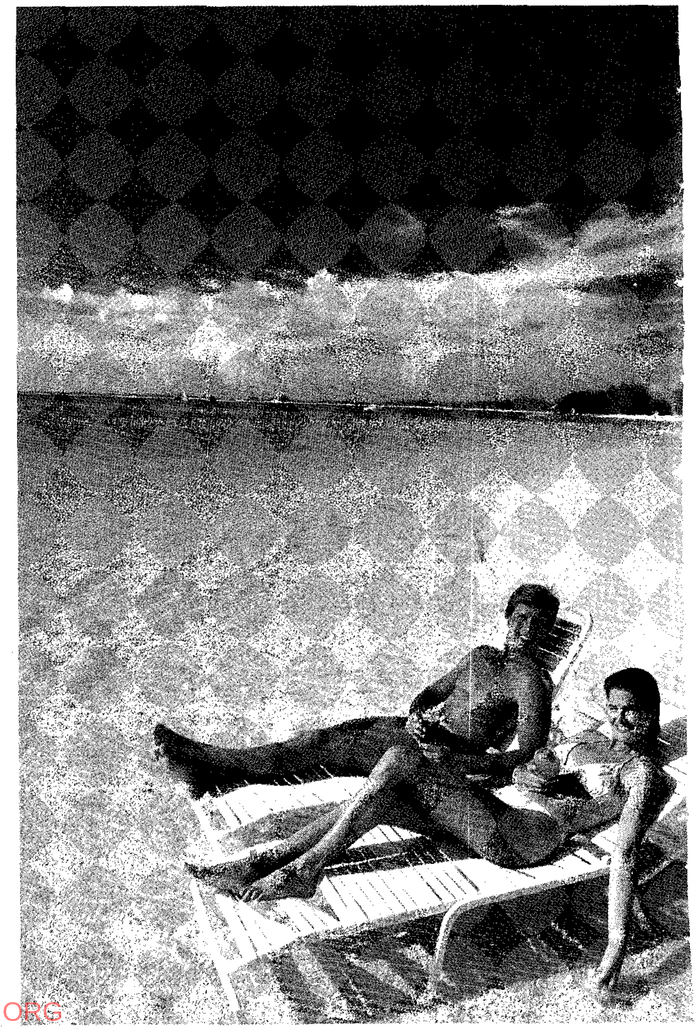


socialist party or a party that represents a coalition. I have not made up my mind yet whether I am a member of this party or not." So angry were some reformers that they promised a bitter struggle in choosing a new Party leadership. This threat prompted a return to an old practice: to avoid a public display of infighting, the congress went into closed session, where delegates elected Nyers the Party president (the position of General Secretary was eliminated) and elected a twenty-four-member presidium in which reformers had eleven seats. Neither Grósz nor Berecz won a seat.

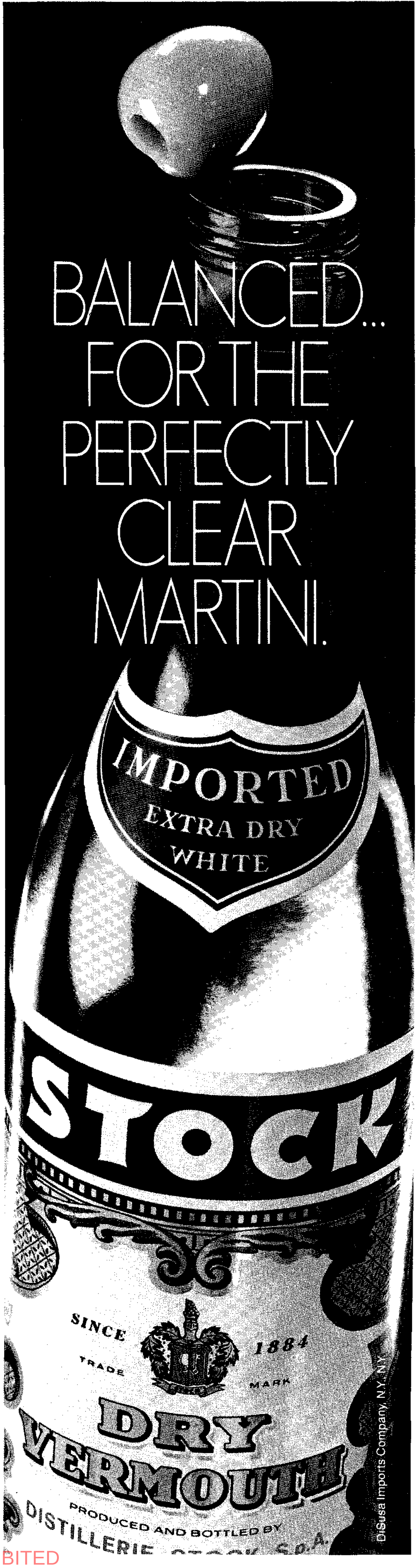
"It is a very great step backward in the history of the Hungarian Communist movement," said Róbert Ribánszky, the hard-line former secretary to János Kádár. He and a few other true believers, adherents of what they called the Marxist Unity Platform, had convened a news conference in a press center that had been set up by the government to accommodate correspondents. But the acceptable line had now shifted, and government interpreters refused to translate for these tough-minded conservatives. So Ribánszky stumbled along in English. "We need to say that the Hungarian Communists didn't give up their power," he declared. "They had the possibility to manage their power, which is belonging to the people and the nation. Those who gave up their power are not Hungarian Communists but somebody else." In the following weeks, the political situation among the conservatives became very fluid. Ribánszky and others in the Old Guard made plans to create a new Communist Party. Grósz and Berecz refused to join the new Socialist Party, and Grósz insisted that he was still a member of the old Socialist Workers Party, which technically went out of existence at the congress. The disarray seemed indicative of orthodox Communism's waning political influence.

LOOKING from the other end of the spectrum, some people felt that the Communists were not giving up enough power. Miklós Haraszti, a dissident writer, was still angry about the agreement on electoral procedures, which had been concluded in September between the opposition and the Communists. Haraszti's party, the Alliance of Free Democrats, and another group, called the Association of Young Democrats, had refused to sign the agreement, because they felt that the Communists had made insufficient concessions. Haraszti was resentful because other opposition groups had broken ranks and signed. He is a sinewy man with a direct gaze, who, like most of the other Free Democrats, came to politics from a risky involvement in the human-rights movement of the nineteen-seventies. Over the years, those rights advocates have applied constant pressure to the Communists to liberalize, and some have suffered as a result. Haraszti's books include "The Velvet Prison: Artists Under State Socialism," a critique of the pampered and censored creative élite, and "A Worker in a Worker's State," based on his experience laboring in a tractor factory. The latter volume brought him close to imprisonment; in 1974, in one of Hungary's last political trials of prominent activists, he was given an eight-month suspended sentence.

I went to see Haraszti at his apartment, on a shabby block of Fejér György Street—a lane so narrow that cars had to park with two wheels up on the sidewalk. A few splashes of color were offered by plantings in flower boxes perched on concrete balconies. I entered a dreary building, took an old elevator as far as it would go, walked up one more flight, and found Haraszti's apartment, on the top floor. His living room was spacious, bright, and pleasant, owing to large windows and skylights that opened onto a view over the rooftops. He and his current wife share the subdivided apartment with his ex-wife—an arrangement testifying to Hungary's housing shortage. He and I sat and tried to talk, but his telephone rang every few minutes, and he finally unplugged it.

Initially in the negotiations, he explained, the opposition parties were united in resisting the demand by the Socialist Workers Party—the Communists—that a powerful Presidency be created and filled quickly, before free parliamentary elections, and before the opposition had time to organize effectively. Leading the Communists' negotiating team was Pozsgay, who seems the most likely victor in the vote for President, on January 7th. The parliament is not to be elected until next spring.

"Pozsgay negotiated very firmly," Haraszti said. "He didn't give in on any of the power-sensitive questions,



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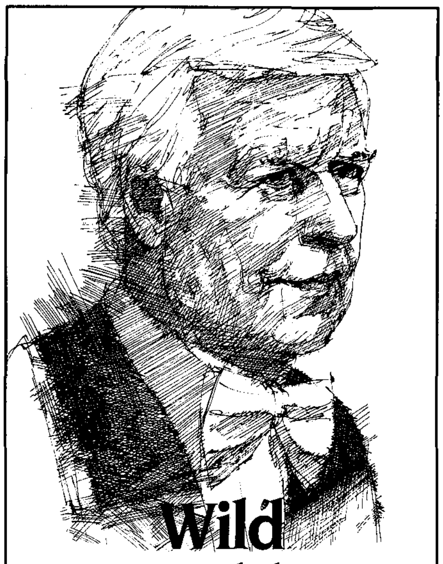

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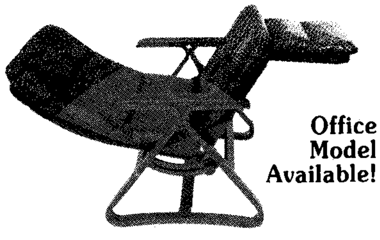

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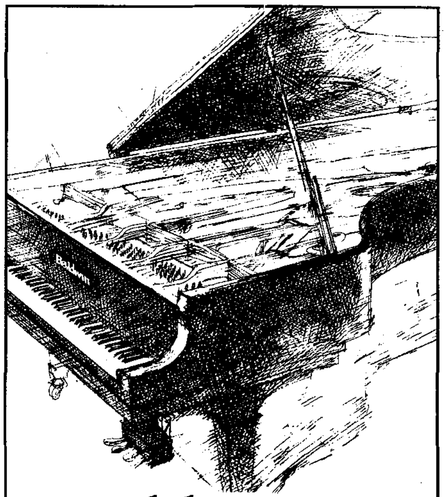
didn't share any powers." Pozsgay would not agree to disband the workers' militia—the Party's force of armed guards, who are widely regarded as brutal thugs. "There are sixty thousand of them, as much as the Soviet Army in this country," Haraszti said. "And they are the hard-core Stalinists, the true believers." Two weeks after our talk, the existing parliament voted to dissolve the militia.

Pozsgay also rejected opposition demands that the Party withdraw from workplaces, although at the congress he seemed to favor that step. "The Party organization in the workplaces is the essence of Communism," Haraszti remarked. "It is what paralyzes, mobilizes, intimidates people." (After the congress, the current parliament passed a law prohibiting party cells in workplaces.) Nor would Pozsgay agree to turn over to the state the Party's property, which includes office buildings, resorts, country houses, and other assets amassed over the decades. Finally, Haraszti complained, "They didn't depoliticize the police or the Army, they didn't share the media. They demanded this Presidency, which will obviously be a powerful thing for the Communist Party if Mr. Pozsgay is elected. And nobody else will be elected, because the opposition parties hardly exist." The largest opposition group, the Democratic Forum, has nominated a little-known history professor, Lajos Für, as its candidate. "They haven't had time to build up any personality," Haraszti said. "Before the free elections, they don't have any guarantee of equal access to the media. Pozsgay has been on the screen, full size, for about ten years. If the elections for President would be one day after the free elections, then Pozsgay would be the candidate of a party with ten to fifteen per cent strength, maximum, and the intimidating effect of the Army or the police or the workers' militia wouldn't work. Our slogan is 'No elections before free elections. No President of the republic before we have a republic.' "

This resolute position was abandoned without warning by most of the opposition groups, including the Democratic Forum, Haraszti said. In preparing for the parliamentary elections, he said bitterly, "we had worked for three months on the election law, really smoothed it up in every detail: how to have access to the media, what is a



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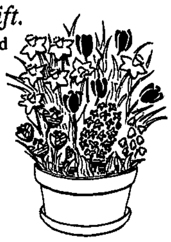

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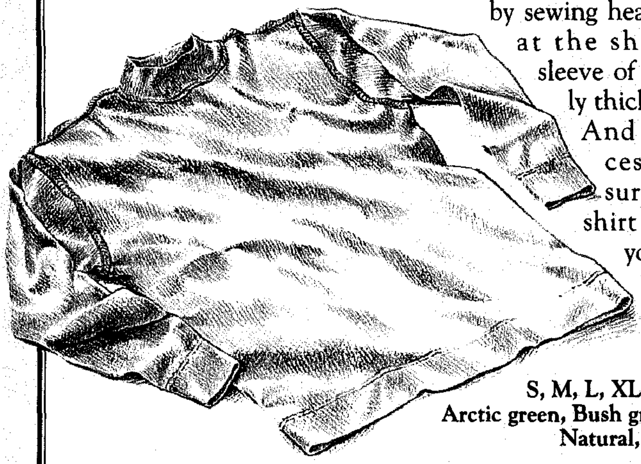
candidate, what are the guarantees of fair counting of the vote, how the districts are defined—everything." None of this scrutiny has been exercised over the Presidential election. "They didn't care about any detail when they rushed into signing the thing," he said.

I asked him why.

"It smells like a deal—'You will be the Prime Minister'—but I don't think anybody has the evidence. It's simply an alliance. Pozsgay helped form the Democratic Forum. The Forum always defined itself as the middle, between the government and the opposition. Lots of its members are from the Communist Party. So I don't think it's necessary to look for a big secret deal. They are allies who have to play the adversary."

Haraszti had a less political explanation as well. He called it Kádárism, after János Kádár, who led the country to a gradual, incomplete liberalization. Kádár came to symbolize an acquiescence in Soviet domination, but one that was relatively benign. "The old, Kádárist way is the lesser evil," Haraszti said. "This very much belongs to the post-'56 psychology of Hungary," in which the choices seemed severely limited, the goal was survival, and the tactic was compromise. Now the choices are broader. The Free Democrats and the Young Democrats have filed a petition with two hundred thousand signatures, twice the required number, calling for a nationwide referendum on whether the Presidential elections should precede or follow the parliamentary elections. The referendum is to be held November 26th. "Communism is finished," Haraszti said as I was leaving. Then he smiled.

AT the moment, the opposition party that seems to have the greatest vote-getting capacity is the Democratic Forum, a loose association of intellectuals, nationalists, and ex-Communists. Its core was created in September of 1987 by "writers and other people who belonged to liberalism, but nineteenth-century liberalism," said Zoltán Biró, the editor of the Forum's biweekly magazine, *Hitel* (or "Credit"). He said that in recent months Forum candidates in four by-elections for vacant seats in parliament had defeated Communists with fifty-five to seventy per cent of the vote. The group appears



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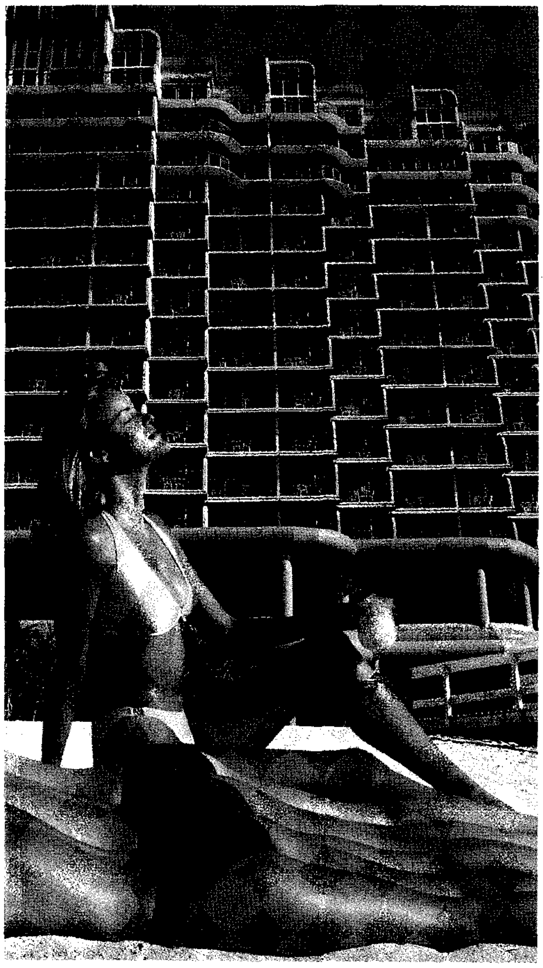

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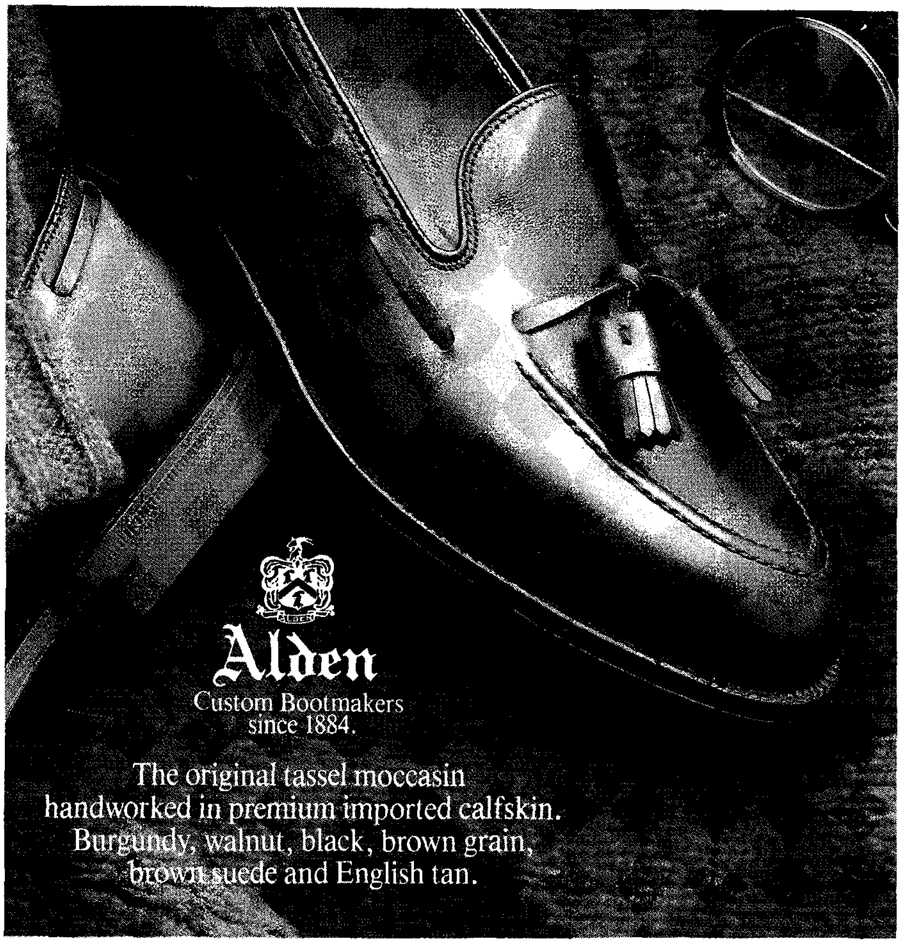
to have struck an effective balance between continuity and change, and Biró's own biography tells something about this middle ground. He was fifteen years old in 1956, but his mother did not allow him to participate in the rebellion. "I just prowled the streets in Budapest," he recalled. "My main task was to get bread, to stand in a line to buy bread. Like all Hungarians, I hated the Russians, seeing death with my own eyes, seeing the corpses all over the street of those who were just a little older than me. I was even sorry for the Russians, seeing the burned tanks." Biró became a high-school teacher of Hungarian literature, joined the Communist Party, and remained a member for twenty-two years. When Imre Pozsgay was Culture Minister, in the late nineteen-seventies, Biró managed the Ministry's department of literature and the press and developed a close relationship with Pozsgay.

Despite such ties, the Forum describes itself as ideologically capitalist, advocating "complete economic freedom and a free market," in the words of Géza Jeszenszky, a historian, who is a dean at the Karl Marx University of Economics and a member of the Forum's executive committee. "We are non-Communist and non-socialist," he said. "Although we do want to show a strong concern to help the poor, in principle we don't think social solutions, even in a Scandinavian sense, are helpful." Nevertheless, the Forum has chosen a gingerly approach to Moscow. "We feel we have to accept continued membership in the Warsaw Pact for the time being," Jeszenszky said. "It is not for us to call for the collapse of the Soviet Union. It doesn't make much difference if Soviet troops are in the country or two hundred miles away."

Jeszenszky took strong exception to what he called the "calumny" against the Democratic Forum as a haven of anti-Semites. "The Forum is simply not anti-Semitic," he declared. "It is committed to full equality for Hungarians without regard to ethnic or religious origin."

A similar denial came from István Csurka, a playwright and Forum activist, whose intense Hungarian nationalism has raised the spectre of xenophobia and anti-Semitism. I met Csurka in the coffee shop of the Buda Penta Hotel the day after the Party congress ended. He was a beefy man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who didn't smile much. "We want to change the way of thinking by getting rid of the servile feeling of inferiority," he said. "In the last forty years, the people's identity has been taken away from them. The West is responsible as well as the Russians. At Yalta, not only Stalin was responsible. From the point of view of the Democratic Forum, democracy will come if we trust only ourselves, and don't expect foreign help."

I asked how he saw Hungarian Jews.

"They play a role, but not as Jewish people," he said. Then he continued, "It cannot be denied that there was a special group of Party leaders, represented by György Aczél. As a Jew, he collected around himself Jewish people in the leadership, in the Kádár era, and they were people playing significant roles in the society. It was very obvious. They are in power in the press, television, radio, but not so much in politics."

And in the economy?

"In the prewar period, Hungary's capital was concentrated in the hands of the Jews, but that was lost in the war," Csurka said.

Is there anti-Semitism?

"No," he said, and he shook his head. "Here in Hungary, there isn't any significant anti-Semitism—only isolated cases. Nobody is hated and despised just because he was born a Jew. In 1956, when the whole nation rose up, Jews and non-Jews rose up and fought side by side."

AT noontime on the last day of the Party congress, one of the Young Democrats, a thirty-two-year-old sociologist named István Hegedüs, met me under the clock in Moscow Square. We walked to a tiny restaurant, which had four tables covered in green-and-white plastic, and where very good soups and goulashes were prepared in a steamy kitchen the size of a closet. Hegedüs was a soft-spoken man with startlingly blue eyes and light-brown curly hair down to his shoulders. He planned to participate in the campaign for parliament, but as an organizer and not as a candidate. "I've got long hair," he said. "It would be impossible to win."

The Young Democrats, commonly known by their Hungarian acronym, FIDESZ, are close to the Free Democrats in their Western-oriented embrace of pluralistic democracy. "We

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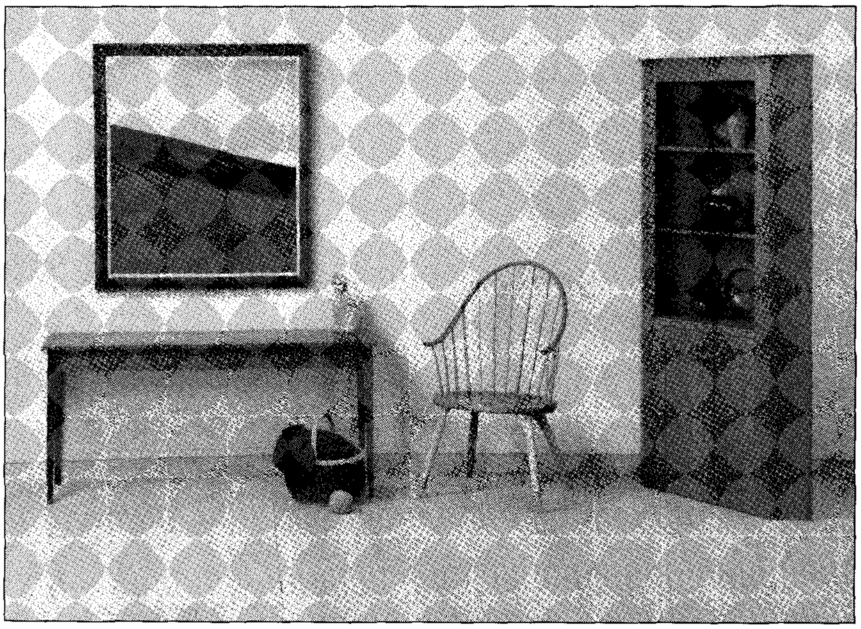

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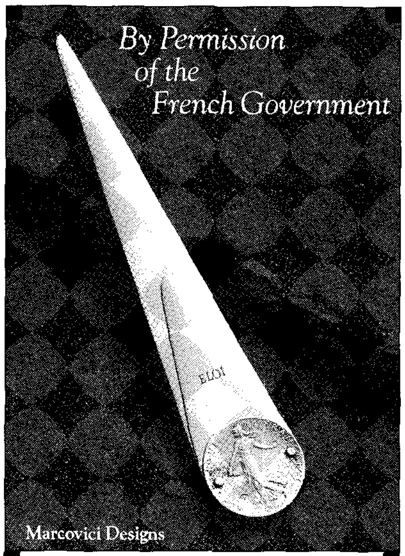
would like to have quite a good connection to the Liberal International," Hegedüs said. When FIDESZ was formed in March of 1988, he commented, "There was only one legal youth movement, the Communist one. From the very beginning, we said that what we are doing is not anti-socialist. We want liberal principles in our society. We want to have new connections to Western countries." In September, FIDESZ was the only opposition group to walk out of a seminar on campaign tactics sponsored by the American Democratic Party's international branch, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. The reason for the walkout was the location: Club Tomaj, a lakeside resort of the workers' militia. Some in the opposition enjoyed the irony of using the retreat of such an infamous group to learn how to throw the Communists out of power. But after the half-dozen FIDESZ delegates arrived and discovered where they were they didn't see the humor. "We said we could *not* stay, because all the money would go to the workers' militia," Hegedüs said. Then, wrinkling his nose, he added, "And the atmosphere of the place."

Later, though, FIDESZ members met with a West German campaign consultant, Peter Schröder, who taught them some techniques and gave them some sound tips. "He showed us how to write a letter, how to sign it, how to go to people in their homes. These are new methods that we hadn't heard of," Hegedüs remarked. "There was quite good advice: to speak about ourselves, and not just criticize other parties or the past, not just speak about the crisis in Hungary. We shouldn't say we are going to do something very new. People will be afraid. They want to have a very stable situation. We should talk about things we want to retain, so we don't provoke people." Hegedüs thought that Schröder was absolutely correct in his assessment of Hungarians' anxieties. "If there is an economic crisis, if the people in the streets begin to make politics, then it can be dangerous," he said. "It can lead to populist demagoguery."

Some would say that there already is an economic crisis, with about twenty per cent of the population officially below the poverty line, a problem of homelessness, a huge foreign debt (the largest per capita in Europe: eighteen



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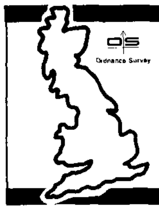

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billion dollars in a country of ten million six hundred thousand people), and inflation running nearly twenty per cent a year. But it could get worse—especially during a transition to a more market-oriented economic system, which would bring free-floating prices and rising unemployment. Hegedüs speculated that Hungarians would look for groups to blame.

"There is anti-Semitism in the population, but it is not a political force," he said. "Much more dangerous is the Gypsy question. If there are pogroms in Hungary, it won't be against the Jews. It will be against the Gypsies. There are Hungarians and Gypsies living in the suburbs, right next to each other, with another culture, another dress." Since many Gypsies are unskilled workers, he said, they are often the first to lose their jobs when unemployment grows. "They begin to steal. And it is a police problem, even now. The Hungarians are not a very tolerant people."

As we finished our meal and ordered espresso, another young man walked in, spotted Hegedüs, and joined us. He had short black hair and wore a gold band stapled through his left ear. His name was László Seres, and he was an anarchist who belonged to something called the Autonomy Group. "We have a concept of a self-managed republic now that the Communist state is collapsing," he said, smiling. "We want to avoid an irrational adoption of the Western way of life. We want to abolish the state and have society organize itself in ecologically sound ways."

I asked him how large his group was.

"If you count everybody, including sympathizers, punks, and everybody, then it's twenty-five," he said.

Seres worked as a news editor for Hungary's official radio, and there he had his small victories. Several months ago, when Imre Pozsgay broke new ground by calling the "events of 1956" a "people's uprising" instead of a "counter-revolution," Seres said, "I began to write 'revolution,' because that's what it was." His change was censored at first, but then it got on the air, radio announcers started calling 1956 a revolution, "and everybody picked it up," he said. "These are little personal successes. If you're in a group here that has no political future, you need little successes."

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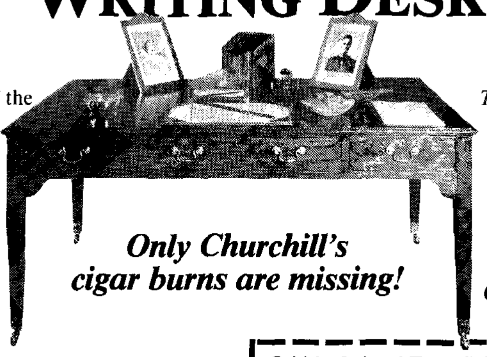

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IN FASHION

Modernism Outmoded

AT the Fiera, in Milan, where the spring Italian ready-to-wear collections—the first clothes for the nineteen-nineties—were being presented a few weeks ago, the talk between shows kept turning to the U.F.O. that, according to Tass, had landed in the Russian city of Voronezh. In the *International Herald Tribune*, witnesses were quoted as describing three aliens, ten to thirteen feet tall, "but with very small heads," who disembarked, along with a robot, took a turn around the city park, then got back on board the spaceship and flew off.

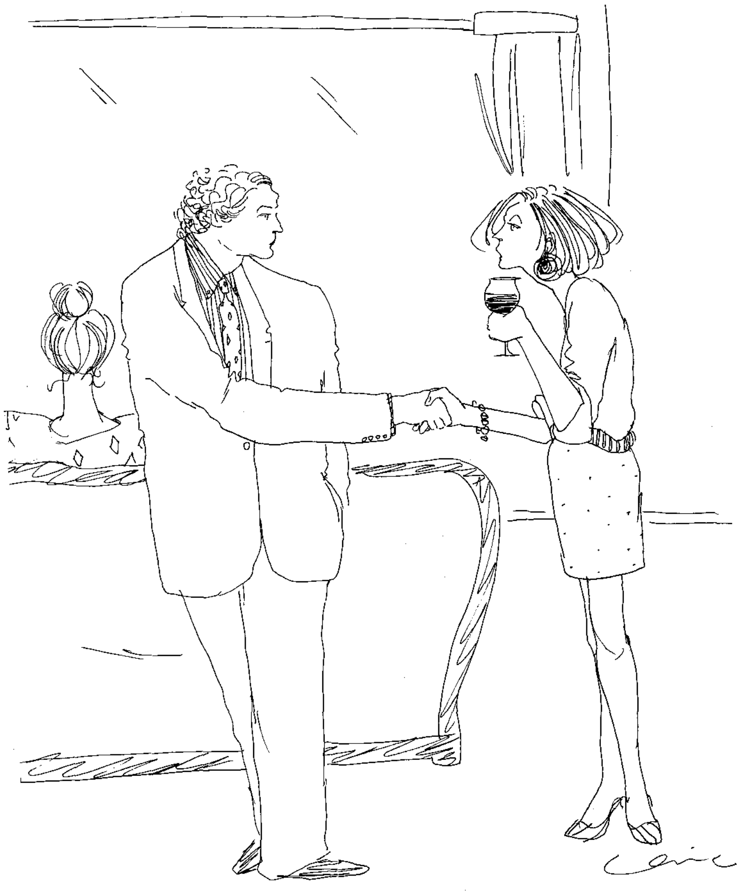
"Well, it makes perfect sense to me," one woman told another as they waited to get into the Gianni Versace show. "I mean, why should we be the only intelligent form of life in the universe?"

"Yes," the other woman answered distractedly, surveying the crowd. "There *must* be interesting men *somewhere*."

Had the aliens landed in Milan that week instead, they might have gone home with tales of the controversy surrounding the twenty thousand dollars Cindy Crawford, a voluptuous brunette routinely featured on the cover of *Cosmopolitan*, was purportedly paid to model in Versace's show; or with reports of having sighted Tina Turner at the Giorgio Armani show wearing an uncharacteristically loose-fitting khaki pants suit (by Armani) and uncharacteristically flat lace-up shoes; or with a review of the party for Versus, Versace's second line, for which a photographer's cavernous studio had been transformed into a discothèque peopled by Jane Fonda and a throng of what one fashion editor called "male chicks"; or with descriptions of one of the week's most poignant moments, at Gianfranco Ferré, when the models, their Barbie-doll bodies the very standards by which so many earthling women measure their shortcomings, sashayed hurriedly down the runway in bathing suits cut high on the leg, nervously swishing towels behind their seats as they walked, as if they felt self-conscious about baring the backs of their thighs; or with an account of Versace's curtain call, heralded by an announcer—a gesture so preposterous that it begged for Ed McMahon to call out, "Heeeere's Gianni!"

It would take someone from another planet to find most of the clothes in Milan this season interesting. During a week that featured forty-one fashion shows presented under the umbrella of the Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana, a trade association, and fifteen or twenty independent productions, the most common complaint—delivered with a shrug, in a resigned tone, in response to the standard question "What did you think of So-and-So's collection?"—was "Just clothes." The vehicle that is the Italian ready-to-wear shows began to seem like a runaway train. The P.R. machinery was in high gear, fuelled by huge amounts of money. The buyers and the press in attendance numbered some five thousand and were from all over the world, and then there were the pirates and the groupies who had bought their tickets on the black market—an elaborate network with connections in the major hotels, where invitations have lately had a way of "disappearing." There's no question that clothes that are "just clothes" have a place in the world and in people's lives, and they may even do better business than the clothes that qualify as fashion. But do they merit being paraded on a runway in a theatre, with a wall-to-wall audience, to the sound of "Satisfaction," "In the Mood," and arias from "Tosca"? The majority of the clothes shown in Milan this season would be better viewed in a showroom at close range, the way they will eventually be seen on the racks in the stores. Nevertheless, most companies insist on a staged production, because of the prestige attached to it—as if by simply mounting a fashion show they could establish themselves as "fashion houses."

Franco Moschino, the Italian designer who in his clothes has been trying to tell the fashion world that something's gone awry, says he can't believe that there are so many companies in America paying the airfare of so many buyers to come to Milan to buy so many clothes. He thinks that it's time the system was changed: maybe designers should present new collections only once a year or twice every three years. But the fashion people don't want to accept such changes, he says, and he explains, "Fashion is a shield, and they are hidden behind it, because even if it's fake it's proving that they are richer or more avant-garde—that they are in the fashion places, the right restaurants and clubs. So if you start to discuss and criticize this shield they feel naked. Losing this shield would



"So. Back to handshakes."

mean losing not only a job or a profession but a personality, a private identity."

One of the most popular shows of the recent week in Milan was Moschino's. As usual, he called a lot of what's going on in fashion into question. His preoccupation with Chanel continues, and he showed a classic navy-and-white cardigan suit made out of crocheted pot holders; skirts with trompe-l'oeil double-strand chain belts embroidered in gold thread and dangling "medallions" that say "Cartoon Couture"; and a white blouse on top of which is worn a pearl-and-gold chain halter (this last, alas, so close to the mark that it could pass for something Karl Lagerfeld had done for the house of Chanel itself). Other Moschino targets this season were fashion junkies (printed in red in the lining of a red jacket was the message, in Italian, "I discovered that the most important thing in my life is my wardrobe"), visible panty lines (a navy skirt with the outline of a pair of underpants traced in gold-embroidered letters repeating the word "MUTANDINE"), and the haute-couture hippie revival (cocktail dresses with gold sequin halters in the shape of peace signs at the back). For evening he showed a simple black floor-length sheath with three huge gold sequin letters running down the front: V(bordering the neckline), I, P.

Sitting at the Krizia show and reading the big gold hoop earrings of the woman in front of me ("Chanel 29, rue Cambon 42.61.83.35"), I imagined a world in which a fashion enthusiast, suffering from amnesia and wandering the streets or stranded in an airport after her purse has been stolen, is extradited on the basis of her earrings to the local Chanel boutique, where, thanks to sales records, her identity is discovered and she is reunited with her family. As if to put the woman sitting in front of me to shame, another member of the fashion audience in Milan wore a houndstooth blazer from Moschino's fall collection with "Expensive Jacket" embroidered in gold thread across the back. The eighties, that decade of flagrant self-advertisement, are finally over.

On the runway at Krizia were short polka-dot slip dresses with matching platform sandals—a rehash of a look from the seventies which was itself a rehash of a look from the thirties. The retro treadmill has run its course. The

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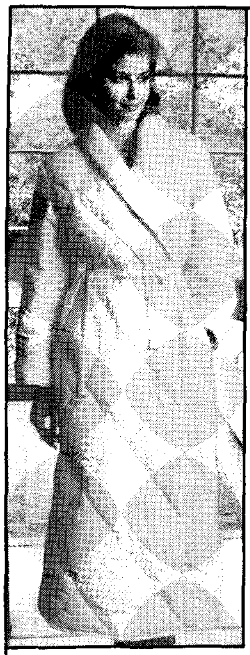

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most compelling clothes shown this season were the ones that seemed in a hurry to get on with things. As for the recent free-floating nostalgia for the golden days of the haute couture, when fashion had no doubts about its own importance and women changed clothes five times a day, Moschino understands it but doesn't subscribe to it. "I don't want you to think that I'm a futuristic person," he says. "I like the past. But to think about the forties and the fifties today is too easy, because past things always look better than they were. It's true that if we go back and look at special things in fashion, the special things are from the couture. And I can see that in the thirties and the forties and the fifties the couture was symbolizing more than a style of dress—it was making people hope and dream about having a beautiful dress that they didn't have. The human being is like that. So it makes sense in this way. But we are 1990, and we have to put it on the calendar now."

When people congratulate Moschino, telling him how beautiful his spring collection is, he says, "My reaction is 'Too bad you missed the things we did before.' The concepts are the same, but now they're filtered through the manufacturing process." This collection is more successful "because we know more how to present it, how to introduce ourselves to people," he concedes. "And this season I realized that I'm less powerful in fashion, because fashion has given me success. The more fashion gives me success, the less I will be able to move it a little bit, the more involved I will be with the business. I'm using fashion to give me fame, and I use this fame to sing my songs and to continue saying my revolutionary things."

FOR a good ten years, the clothes that qualified as fashion—that gave us hope and gave expression to our daydreams—and the clothes that were just clothes were one and the same; our fantasy of a better future was a world in which people dressed year in and year out in "real clothes," clothes that were "classic" and (understood but never stated) safe and, above all, "modern." This season, for the first time in a long while, the distinction between fashion and clothes was clear, as if fashion, in eclipse since the late seventies, were finally moving out from behind the racks of navy-

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blue blazers and khaki trenchcoats.

There was fashion at Dolce & Gabbana, where the two designers have parlayed their ongoing fascination with fifties longline bras into black elasticized cat suits and minidresses, with bra bodices and hook-and-eye closings, and at Zuccoli, where a group of cotton jackets, dresses, tunics, pants, and skirts scrambled black and white stripes with a print featuring the façade of the church of Santa Maria Novella, in Florence. Karl Lagerfeld's collection for Fendi, with its opening passage of putty-and-black knits, was unmistakably fashion. So was Gianfranco Ferré's collection, with its caramel-colored leather jackets perforated with big brass grommets, its leather pants embossed to look like anaconda, and its open-weave burlap suit.

At Basile, Genny, Complice, Erreuno, Krizia, and Emporio Armani, there were, for the most part, just clothes: sundresses and jackets and halter tops and shorts that were eminently wearable but empty somehow, lacking the sort of ideas—research into the science of dressmaking, or notions of dress-up and make-believe—that transcend but don't necessarily override practical considerations.

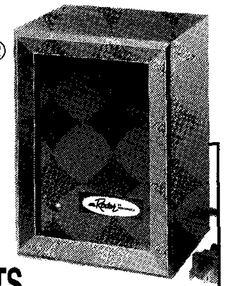
There was also fashion where you would least expect to find it. At Ferragamo, for instance, a white denim miniskirt and jacket with white grosgrain-ribbon edging and lined in silk printed with some of the house's most famous designs for shoes over the years and a short skirt paved in navy matte sequins accompanied by a navy sweater with a big white organza shawl collar proved that clothes that are conservative, steeped in their own tradition, need not be vapid.

But it was at Sybilla that fashion began to seem as if it were off and running again, in clothes that invoked such unlikely bedfellows as Claire McCardell and Balenciaga. The show, which one member of the audience described as "sweet, almost amateurish," was presented by an assortment of models so disparate that the only thing they seemed to have in common was their devotion to the designer and her work. The daughter of a Polish mother, who was herself a designer on Seventh Avenue, and an Argentine diplomat father posted to Egypt, Sybilla was born in New York and raised in Franco's Spain. She was, by her own description, "an ugly, nasty, spoiled little girl who wanted to be an oceanographer," but after Franco died, she says, night life in Madrid "exploded," and for a girl who was extremely shy ("I almost didn't speak") clothes suddenly took on a new importance; they became her social lifeline—a means of expressing herself and communicating with other people. At eighteen, she went to Paris and found work as a seamstress at Yves Saint Laurent. The clothes Sybilla now designs (in Madrid, though they are manufactured in Italy) are often intricately constructed, even when they fall into the most deceptively simple categories—like the tank bathing suits with darts at right angles, or the grass-green cotton shirtwaist dress with the bodice sewn in triangles, or the shorts that, seen from the back, look like a skirt, or even the handbags, sewn in leather sections, in the shape of gourds.

Sybilla says that she, too, is feeling the constraints imposed by success and by the necessity of supporting a business that keeps getting bigger. Now there are people telling her to listen to them—telling her that they have years of experience, that she can't do this or that, that that's the way things are. These days, she says, she thinks often of a Spanish saying that goes: "You had better change the world quickly, before the world changes you."

WHAT constitutes modernism in fashion has been a subject of debate for the better part of this century. Chanel defined it as freedom of movement. Other designers, over the years, have understood it to mean synthetic, low-maintenance fabrics, or disposable paper dresses, or neon colors, or black, streamlined shapes, or lack of construction, or one-size-fits-all, or the absence of zippers and buttons and hooks, or men's clothing for women, or space suits, or the elimination of bras and girdles—or even going barebreasted, as if the whole of fashion history had been a long, slow march toward that day when we would at last cast off our inhibitions and go naked. Mostly, it seems, modernism has been whatever we've wanted it to be at the time. What all these approaches had in common was a certain pragmatism—an insistence on function at the expense of ornament, on "real life" at the expense of fantasy.

In retrospect, the course of modernism in fashion seems to have run paral-



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lel to the course of modernism in the arts and architecture, which have already moved on past postmodernism, whatever that was, to its sequel, whatever that is. In fashion, as in art, modernism abolished the extraneous, isolated the elements of composition, and explored their possibilities—a process that led inexorably to minimalism. In painting, the image was freed from what had been its function, the obligation to represent something; in fashion, the article of clothing was freed from decoration, from its obligation to ingratiate. What began as liberating eventually ran its course and in the end revealed its limitations: art in time dwindled into sheer decoration, with people selecting, say, a Kenneth Noland painting because its colors looked good with the living-room rug, and clothes degenerated into uniforms, functional and generic—with men, women, and children living, day in and day out, in bluejeans.

Though the ideas modernism defined in art and in architecture now strike us as dated, and figures like Picasso and Mies van der Rohe seem more and more remote, situated somewhere just this side of the nineteenth century, “modern” is still a buzzword in the world of fashion, still applied for lack of a better word to clothes that are stripped down and serviceable. Designers—particularly American designers—still talk about wanting to make clothes that are, above all, “modern”; when the fashion reviewers write that something is “modern,” they mean it as a seal of approval, indicating that the clothes have passed the tests (suitcases, taxi cabs) of everyday life as we now live it. In this, its vaguest sense, modernism in fashion is assumed to be not a movement but an era, stretching from here into the horizon of the twenty-first century and beyond—an endless future, already under way, from which there will be no turning back, nor any reason anyone would ever want to. All fashion, according to this plan, divides into the modern and the pre-modern.

People who tend to read history in dialectical terms can interpret the story of fashion in this century as a few mere swings of the pendulum between modernism (or reason) and nostalgia (or sentimentality). Others, intent on progress, will see modernism as a movement whose rise has been continuous, despite an occasional setback.

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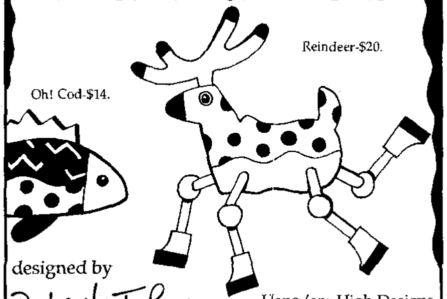

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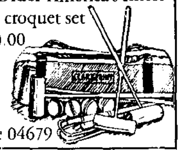

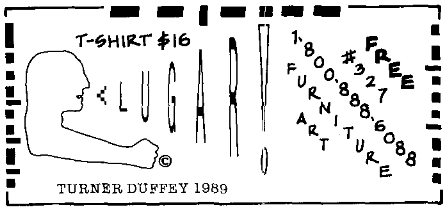

(On witnessing the helplessness of a woman dressed in Dior's New Look who dropped her purse and couldn't bend over to pick it up, because her corset was too tight, Chanel remarked to a companion that in the space of a few seasons Dior had managed to undo all that she had worked a lifetime to achieve.) Those who believe that in history every movement runs its course will find in the recent appetite for the clothes of a designer like Romeo Gigli plenty of support for the theory that modernism in fashion is in its dying days.

◆

Taken all together, Gigli's museum-quality flocked velvets and antique gilt brocades and iridescent organzas, his Fortuny pleating and chandelier earrings and Venetian-glass hair ornaments add up to a look that is highly particular—what David Livingstone, of the Toronto *Globe and Mail*, called in conversation "a very bookish kind of decadence." Apart from the stretch fabrics—stretch wool gabardines, stretch linens, stretch velvets—and apart from the streamlined cut of the pants, Gigli's clothes are not "modern" by almost anyone's definition. They do not for the most part afford the freedom of movement that Chanel considered so important. In skirts and dresses hobbled at the knees, Gigli's models walk in slow shuffling steps, like geisha girls, wearing shoes that look like fabric bound around the feet. "Never have women in flat shoes looked so helpless," a friend remarked after a recent Gigli show. In fact, their presentation suggests that Gigli's clothes weren't *meant* for moving in: that they were intended to be seen stock-still, frozen in a moment of repose—to be admired the way a fresco is admired. The models never lift their arms or spin or dance; they move along like icons on wheels.

This fall, for the second season in a row, Gigli chose to present his collection in Paris, and his absence from the schedule in Milan was the more conspicuous in that his influence was everywhere. If five years ago someone had drawn up a blueprint for the very antithesis of the swaggering, hard-edged, broad-shouldered, smart-tailored, slim-hipped woman who dominated the runways and the streets—a woman first and best visualized by Saint Laurent—it would surely have been Gigli's woman: the narrow, sloping shoulders, the body swathed in fabric, the pear-shaped silhouette that echoes the images of madonnas in fifteenth-century Florentine paintings. Not since the beginning of the seventies, when Saint Laurent put a woman in a blazer and pants, with a fur boa and high heels, has a single designer transformed fashion so drastically—and so rapidly.

"Here's the Romeo Gigli group," the woman sitting next to me at Versace said at the start of a passage of gilt-embroidered kimono jackets. "There's one in every collection." At Prada, the raw-silk pants suits were cut high-waisted, close to the body, with the jackets fastened by a single button—like Gigli's this fall. At Jil Sander, the silhouette followed the same lines as Gigli's—the pants so narrow that they fastened with zippers or snaps at the ankle, the jacket long and fitted through the torso. "I guess this is the look of the nineties," one department-store executive remarked. Even Giorgio Armani seemed to go out of his way to justify kilim jackets, ethnic-inspired drop earrings, pearl-encrusted organdie scarves, and a silhouette that bore a striking resemblance to Gigli's when he projected Bakst's painting of Nijinsky in "Les Orientales" on the backdrop—as if to say that he hadn't taken his cue from Gigli but had gone straight to the source for his inspiration, and that, besides, this stuff is all in the public domain.

A few weeks later, at the collections in New York, random fragments of the look Gigli pioneered kept cropping up all over the place—Ralph Lauren's Fortuny-pleated silk bandeau here, Norma Kamali's jersey togas in earth colors there, shiny fabrics and long pendant earrings and beaded scarves everywhere. Carolyne Roehm sent out a blush-colored rendition of a one-shoulder ballerina dress that Gigli did in black last year. At Donna Karan, a strapless matte-gold tunic with a fringe of beads dripping down over a short skirt, and a full-cut, stole-collared cocoon coat with drooping shoulders, called Gigli to mind; at Charlotte Neuville, it was cuffed pants, cropped a few inches above the ankle; at Yeohlee, narrow Indian silk Capri pants with charms around the ankle. In many cases, in both Milan and New York, the similarity to what Gigli has been doing was confined to a single passage or a single outfit, or even a single

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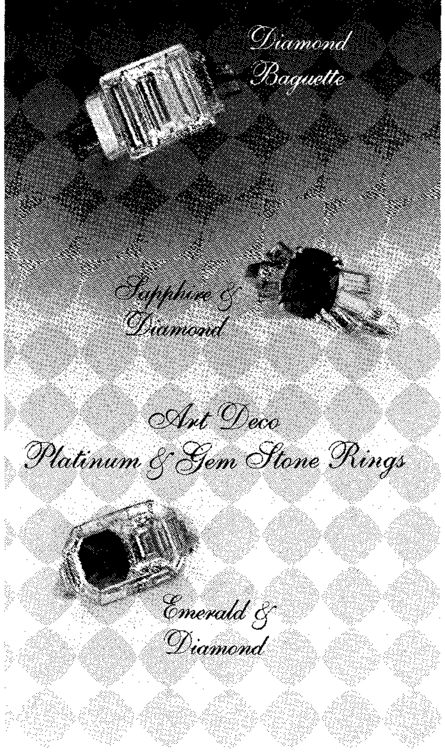

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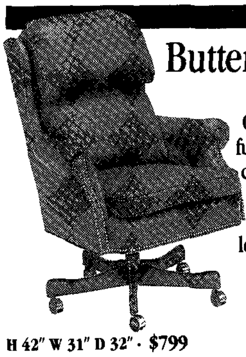

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detail, which was the more striking because it looked so unlike the style in which these other designers usually work.

If fashion can be said to have a subject, or subjects, surely one is time—how we feel about the past and the future at any given moment. The balance we strike in the clothes we wear—between nostalgia and curiosity, between boredom and apprehension—indicates the speed at which we're moving forward. Lately, it has seemed as if many designers—particularly the younger ones, with the shadows of Chanel, Madeleine Vionnet, Dior, Balenciaga, Charles James, Claire McCardell, and others falling across their worktables—had felt the past to be too much with them. Sybilla claims to feel no such pressure, and says, "I get very insulted when people say that everything in fashion is already invented, that you can't do anything new."

For most of us, the height of high fashion is the photographs of the fifties and early sixties—stark black-and-white images of long, willowy women in Dior suits or Balenciaga coats or Jacques Fath cocktail dresses, as seen by Richard Avedon and Irving Penn. These clothes contain something—let's call it glamour—that is missing from the clothes we've been wearing. Is this irretrievable? Does it exist only in retrospect? Why over the past ten years have so many designers turned to Audrey Hepburn's old movies for inspiration? "I know that women want glamour," Sybilla says. "But I think there is another kind of glamour—intelligent glamour, I would call it. A kind of glamour that mixes very well with a woman's way of being, and doesn't impose too much."

Moschino says, "You can call it glamour or chic or class, whatever you want, but all these words don't mean anything, because they have always been defined visually. They all stand for the same never-never land, and we will never get there. There's a paradox here, because a lot of the people who have glamour don't need it, and the others, who do need it, who are all the time reaching for it, will never have it."

Gigli's detractors predictably claim that his clothes are unwearable and impractical, a throwback to the days when fashion was the common faith

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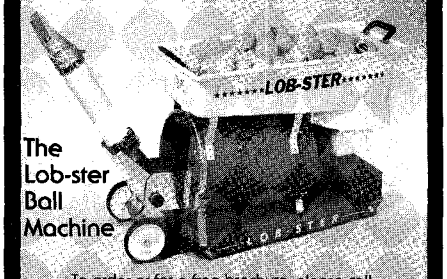

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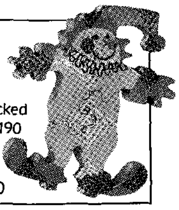

and women were there to be venerated rather than known and loved. Maybe. But it strikes me as more likely that Gigli's sudden popularity, like Christian Lacroix's a few years ago, when the pouf skirt swept the market, is a sign of something deeper and more chronic.

Fashion is essentially an optimistic undertaking, the means by which we sustain our hopes and persuade ourselves that tomorrow is not only another day but a different day. Without this foothold for our imaginations, we would find ourselves mired in an interminable present, in which the clothes for next spring—however well cut, however wearable—would look no different from the clothes we had worn last spring, or, for that matter, from the clothes we were wearing now. Modernism in fashion, as in art, is founded on certain inarguable principles, and even now that we're disillusioned with where they have taken us there's no refuting them. We have reached an impasse: as far as fashion's concerned, we still adhere to the principles of modernism intellectually, and no one is prepared to say that clothes shouldn't be practical and enduring and uncomplicated, but the fact is that we now realize just how useful fantasy can be—more useful, at times, than the earnest jacket that goes with everything.

There have always been the fashion enthusiasts and the people who just aren't interested—the people whose imaginations think in terms of clothes and the people whose imaginations turn elsewhere. But thirty years ago, when most women made some sort of effort to conform to a certain standard, it was harder to tell the two camps apart, and the women who weren't interested nevertheless played along. Since then, some of these women have discovered that they don't need fashion at all, that in fact they've never needed it. Fashion has lost them—perhaps not for good but for the time being. They're content to wear jogging suits to the grocery store, oblivious of the spring collections, and invest their money in real estate rather than satin jodhpurs. Fashion has become specialized, with a tradition of its own, to be followed the way one follows the theatre or the opera, and Gigli and the designers under his influence are preaching to the converted.

—HOLLY BRUBACH

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THE THEATRE

An Evening with the Widow

“The Widow’s Blind Date,” by Israel Horovitz, which opened last week at Circle in the Square Downtown, shows that at least his talent for arresting titles has remained undiminished through a lot of years and a lot of plays since “The Indian Wants the Bronx.” “The Indian,” one of the key plays of the nineteen-sixties, was about a couple of street punks who tease and torment an East Indian at a bus stop; it was shortly followed by my favorite Horovitz play, “It’s Called the Sugar Plum.” Both these works and many of his others consist of conversations that either precede or follow an act of violence.

“The Widow’s Blind Date” is set in Wakefield, Massachusetts, in a large factory room where two men, George and Archie, are stacking newspapers and placing them in a baling machine. The men, in their mid-thirties, were high-school classmates, and their friendship and conversation have remained at high-school level ever since, dotted with reminiscences of various kinds. There is an undercurrent of rage and excitement and mystery when they are joined by Margy, another classmate, who has a date for dinner with Archie, and there is some sexual guesswork, too, but nothing overt almost until the end. The dialogue is camouflage, and what it’s hiding—a long-ago gang rape—is as violent as anything Mr. Horovitz has ever imagined.

Margy is the widow of the title, and, as portrayed by Christine Estabrook, with her usual strength and talent, she makes the line “*I was seventeen*” ring through the theatre. That is one line among many, though; the banality of the men and of the words they speak do the play in. George and Archie are bores, albeit criminal bores, and even the good acting of Tom Bloom and Paul O’Brien cannot rescue them. A note of excellence is supplied, as is so often the case, by Edward T. Gianfrancesco’s setting, lighted here by Craig Evans. Mr. Horovitz directed.

Set in a small town in Texas, the action of Robert Schenkkan’s “Heaven on Earth,” at the WPA, takes place in the back yard and on the back porch of a woman named Martha, who lives there with her rebellious grandson, Bobby, Jr. The porch is cluttered with old appliances, which Bobby plans to repair and sell. He does neither. In a state of fury ever since his parents were killed in an automobile accident when he was ten years old, Bobby doesn’t do much besides drink beer and quarrel with his grandmother. By the end, the stage is carpeted with beer cans. Martha, a religious type, who keeps thrusting God and prayer upon the boy (they only fuel his fury), works in a local beauty shop; Bobby cannot hold a job.

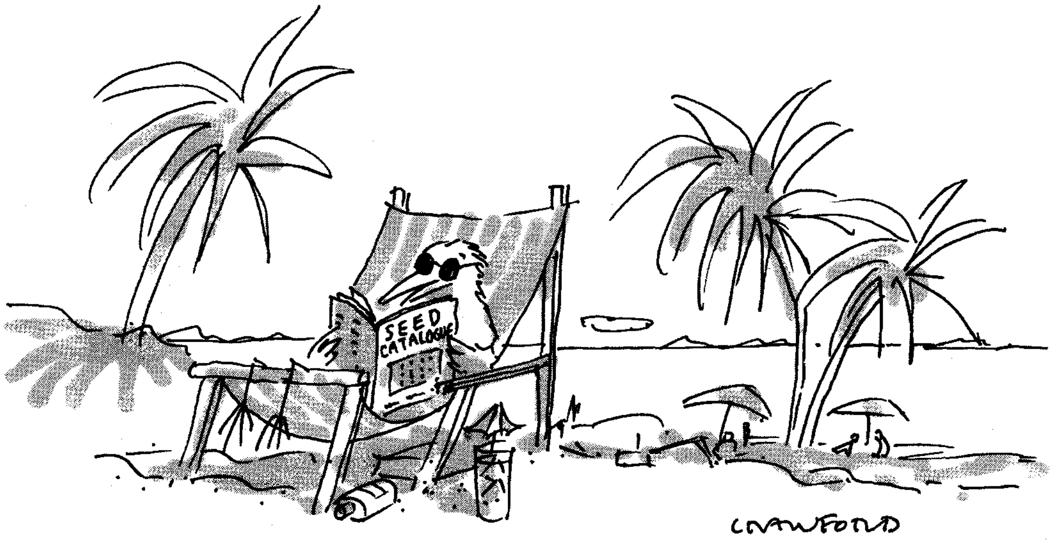
One evening, Martha, walking home with a friend of hers from the shop, glances at a dilapidated old freezer, on which, in the light from a neighboring porch, they see the lineaments of Jesus. Martha is tremendously agitated, and cynical Bobby is gleeful. He turns the house into a shrine, which attracts tourists and at least one television evangelist. The second act becomes a festival of blasphemy, with bumper stickers and T-shirts printed with crosses and pious messages on sale. Finally, disgusted with all the fuss and noise, the neighbor switches off the porch light, thereby killing the image on the freezer and bringing the festivities to a close. A man who may or may not be a purchaser of old appliances enters near the end and supplies a strain of so-so mysticism in the middle of hullabaloo.

Amidst the alien corn, there is real humor here, and there are passages of feeling and truth. And the play is certainly playable. Helen Stenborg and Jay O. Sanders are ideal as Martha and Bobby, Jr. In support, Bobo Lewis is properly comical as the friend, and Steven Rodriguez, as a Mexican crony of Bobby’s; Raynor Scheine, as the used-appliance man; and Arthur Hanket, as the television preacher, are everything the playwright could wish for. Mark Brokaw directed, and Edward T. Gianfrancesco performed another miracle, setting the play on the tiny stage of the WPA; appropriate costumes by Ellen McCartney. “Heaven on Earth” was originally produced at the O’Neill Playwrights Conference last summer. By the way, Mr. Schenkkan, who is also a good actor, played the sinister minister in “The Foreigner,” in 1984.

—Edith Oliver

Anything That Moves

If you like the old M-G-M musical “Meet Me in St. Louis,” about the joys and sorrows of the Smith family of 5135 Kensington Avenue, St. Louis, during the year of the 1904 World’s Fair, then you probably won’t want to see the stage version that opened November 2nd at the Gershwin Theatre. Directed by Louis Burke, it has a book by Hugh Wheeler, songs by Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane (who wrote the movie score), and a cast that includes George Hearn (Mr. Smith), Milo O’Shea (Grandpa), Charlotte Moore (Mrs. Smith), and Betty Garrett (the wise-cracking maid), and suffice it to say that they are none of them Leon Ames, Harry Davenport, Mary Astor, or



Marjorie Main, respectively. Even if you don't like the M-G-M musical, you probably won't want to see this concoction, which combines the bland, earnest, wholesome values of the original with an aesthetic of surpassing vulgarity.

"Meet Me in St. Louis" is one of those movie musicals that ride almost entirely on charm—on Vincente Minnelli's misty-eyed vision of small-town America, say, or on the personality of a Judy Garland or a Margaret O'Brien. Without Garland to put it over, "The Boy Next Door" is just a boring saccharine ballad with silly lyrics, and the child Tootie without a star like O'Brien to play her is just a show-business brat. The creators of the current show seem to have had no understanding of the initial appeal of either the 1944 movie or the Sally Benson stories on which it was based. Instead, they assume that a Broadway audience asks no more than to see a lot of things wheeled on, off, or around the stage. ("Oh, my God!" said the young man who attended the opening-night performance with me. "They're going to clap everything that moves!") There's a trolley (of course), an old-fashioned two-wheeler, another bicycle (not so old-fashioned), a man in a bath chair, and a vast, multi-part set (designed by Keith Anderson, who also designed the costumes) that keeps grinding into motion to serve up some new notion of spectacle—a porch, the house next door, an upstairs bedroom, a tree stump (for the Halloween sequence), a triad of snowpeople (for the climactic snowman-bashing scene), a Christmas tree that grows up out of the floor, "Nutcracker" style. None of this stuff has the power to excite or impress, because there is nothing theatrically artful going on. Lavishness is its own reward.

The Messrs. Martin and Blane have added to their original score a selection of torpid songs: one about whether it's better to be a boy or a girl; one about the niceness of ice; one (though you may not believe it) about how to bag a husband, which is called "A Touch of the Irish" and has Betty Garrett dancing a jig on the kitchen table. There's a scary Halloween production number, a dream ballet the like of which hasn't been seen, perhaps, since Agnes de Mille, and a marching-band sequence, performed front-of-curtain, that brings the company down the aisles in full "Music Man" regalia, and is so patently there to allow stagehands to erect the World's Fair set that it wouldn't fool a child Tootie's age. Poor George Hearn, trying to convince the family that moving to New York isn't such a bad thing, is reduced to imitating zoo animals. As for the rest of the cast—Donna Kane in the Judy Garland role, Courtney Peldon as Tootie, Jason Workman as John (The Boy Next Door) Truitt, and Juliet Lambert as the eldest sister, Rose—the less said about them the better.

"Meet Me in St. Louis" may sound like harmless kiddie fare, but I don't think it's as harmless as all that. Given the way in which the two ingénues behave—Miss Lambert like giggling Gertie from "Oklahoma!" and Miss Kane like a sexually avaricious lioness—your child might very well come away from "Meet Me in St. Louis" with all the wrong values. In any case, why see the show when you can rent the movie?

THE object that racks up the most mileage in "Prince of Central Park" is a park bench that keeps ferrying itself on and off the stage or being whirled round on a turntable. This musical is about a twelve-year-old boy who runs away from an abusive foster mother to live in a tree house in Central Park, where he forges a friendship with Jo Anne Worley. The park bench is important because on it the two carry on a voluminous chalk correspondence.

"Prince of Central Park" is the best howler I've seen since "Welcome to the Club," and all those who relish the chance to see a really bad musical (or are still kicking themselves for having missed "Carrie") should hurry along to the Belasco while it lasts. It has a mirrored-ball number, a dog, a colored-umbrella number, a mannequin number set in Bloomingdale's, a lot of sexy and energetic aerobic dancing (of the sort that shows off the musculature of the male members of the company), a scatological song (about "crap"), an all-company number in which a pair of tap-dancing cops, a ballet dancer, and two homosexual couples hoof it out with Jo Anne Worley in the middle of the Central Park Ramble, and so many references to the Tavern on the Green that it's almost impossible to believe that the restaurant's owners haven't underwritten the show.

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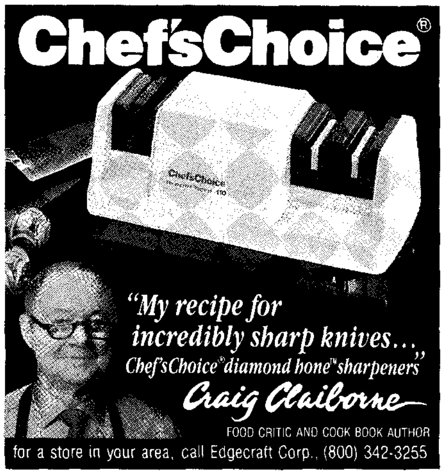
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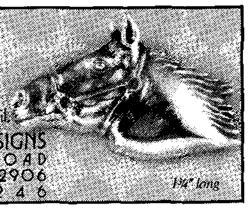

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limit of gasping ineptitude—but no. Some people are discovered hymning the onset of evening on a Central Park bridge; then the bridge begins to move; then two men seem to emerge together singing from behind a bush, and one of them hands the other his card. It's unbelievable what's been allowed to creep into this musical: there's a black youth straight out of one of the racial-stereotyping scenes in "Hollywood Shuffle" (I refuse to think of this performance as anything but an *hommage*), a running gag about the homeless involving a bag lady, and a playground-swing number that takes place at night, complete with stars, dry ice, and a Jefferson Airplane–type score. I haven't enjoyed anything so much since the shower scene in "Carrie," though I think my favorite number was one called "They Don't Give You Life at Sixteen," in which a group of marauding youths with staves analyze the juvenile-justice system while turning cartwheels, doing the samba, and knocking the bulbs out of lampposts.

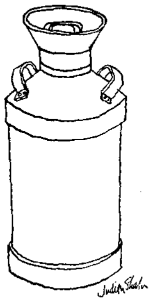
The songs for "Prince of Central Park" were written by Don Sebesky (music) and Gloria Nissenson (lyrics). I can't quite put my finger on what they didn't remind me of, but there were certainly a lot of them. Michael Bottari and Ronald Case provided the revealing costumes and the highly inaccurate skylines. Considering what Jo Anne Worley is required to do, she's pretty terrific. Alice Yearsley is brilliant as a mannequin. That's quite a set of pipes on Richard H. Blake, who plays the kid (once or twice, I thought he was Ethel Merman), and quite a set of abs on Anthony Galde, who plays the juvenile delinquent. Tony Tanner, who directed, must have quite a sense of humor, and so must Evan H. Rhodes, who wrote the book for the show, based on his own novel—a hundred thousand copies of which, according to a program note, are at this very moment being circulated in the Soviet Union "as an example of what happens to an orphan in a decadent capitalist society."

IF you really want something harmless and cheery to take your kids to—something bland, upbeat, and utterly innocuous and undisturbing—you might take them to John Dexter's revival of "The Threepenny Opera," currently at the Lunt-Fontanne. Except for the presence of Sting (late of the rock band the Police), John Dexter's revival is so much like a school production that a couple of times I actually thought I was back in the Riverdale auditorium watching my friend Kari's twin brother Kenny play one of Peachum's beggars. That student production, mind you, is the only one I'd ever seen onstage, which puts me, I imagine, in the same position as most of the young people for whom the rock star is supposed to be a draw—people who are too young to have seen the famous Theatre de Lys production that ran for years in the fifties, and who were off somewhere bopping to Blondie in 1976, when the New York Shakespeare Festival production had its run. (I was out of the city.) I know only recordings of the show (from those productions and the German-language version that Goddard Lieberson produced for Columbia Records in 1958) and the film that was made in Germany in 1931. Nor am I competent to judge Michael Feingold's new translation of the piece. My German doesn't go much beyond "*Entschuldigen Sie, bitte, wo ist der Ausgang?*," but it would have been a handy phrase.

The notion of turning Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill's savage fable of bourgeois capitalism into a commercial vehicle for a rock star is patently absurd, yet casting one in the role of Macheath is not in and of itself a bad idea. It would depend on the rock star. One might argue that each age has to produce its own version of Brecht's predatory capitalist—someone who represents the prevailing zeitgeist, and whom we can find ourselves appallingly attracted to as he commits crimes against humanity. To my ears, Scott Merrill, who played Macheath in the Theatre de Lys production, has always sounded a bit Broadway; there's a show-business polish to his performance. But I don't think you'd find anyone who saw the Theatre de Lys production agreeing with me.

I've always assumed that Merrill's performance was right for its time, because Broadway Leading Man constituted that period's culture hero. But there has to be some marriage between image and idea. Sting is the sort of rock star who creates a public image by adopting moral postures—in favor of rain forests and Amnesty International, say (things that don't really take much character to stand up for).

But "Threepenny Opera" exists partly to blow the whistle on moral posturing, and that's one problem with casting Sting as Macheath. Another is that he is so little equipped to be a singing actor that every time he opens his mouth to try you're reminded of the real reason for his presence on the Lunt-Fontanne stage: the fact that he is famous and well connected. It's like a ghastly parody of the concept of Brechtian "alienation."



This non-singing aspect of Sting's performance is nothing like the non-singing you get from the German performers on the Lieberson recording—a bilious warble, somewhere between a song and a snarl, that sits well with Weill's dissonances and underscores the ferocity of Brecht's lyrics. Sting's caterwauling isn't a matter of style; it's merely anxiety-producing (will he be able to hit or hold a particular note?), and it destroys the ensemble effect needed to put across epic theatre. It tends to be most embarrassing when Sting performs in duet with someone who *can* sing—with Nancy Ringham's Polly, or Suzzanne Douglas's Jenny. As an actor, moreover, Sting is only slightly less limited than he is as a vocalist; consequently, he has to take refuge in buffoonery. In his hands, Mack the Knife becomes a succession of purely comic figures: now Lord of the Manor, now Trapped Husband, now Character-in-a-Farce. And when he isn't upstaging the sinister aspect of Macheath's dramatic function, he's upstaging the point of a song. He performs "The Ballad of Pleasant Living" while playing jungle gym in his jail cell—climbing on the bars, doing chin-ups, and swinging himself up into a hokey, horizontal, chin-on-hand pose at the end of the song, so the audience is applauding his rock-star agility rather than thinking about the lyrics. Here, I must say, Feingold's translation so obscures the moral thrust of the refrain that the song is emasculated in any case. What Marc Blitzstein (for the Theatre de Lys production) translated as "The bulging pocket makes the easy life," and Willett and Manheim (for the N.Y.S.F.) as "One must live well to know what living is," Feingold warps into "It takes a lot of cash to live in style," to which observation one can only reply, "Well, er, yes—and you're the man to tell us about it, Sting!"

That this production carries the wrong message is largely the fault of the rock star, but not entirely. The fact is that John Dexter hasn't helped matters. He hasn't coached Sting sufficiently in his acting (the song in which Macheath alternately curses everyone and prays for their forgiveness is so stolidly unmoving you want to cry with vexation), but neither has he done anything to offset the effect of Sting's tomfoolery. Rather, he plays into it: he has Miss Ringham (who was filling in for Maureen McGovern at the performance I attended) perform "The Barbara Song"—which Brecht, no doubt, intended as a twisted joke on the bourgeois ingénue—as burlesque, holding her belly (presumably the seat of lust), collapsing on the floor, and practically simulating orgasms. Every single turn of plot or character development is played for the broadest possible comedy. Dexter transforms the corrupt police chief, Tiger Brown (Larry Marshall), into a Keystone Cop, and his daughter, Lucy (Kim Criswell), virtually into a drag queen. Ethyl Eichelberger's Ballad Singer is a frightened, mugging, tippling clown. Under Dexter's direction, even such veteran performers as Alvin Epstein and Georgia Brown make Peachum and his missus seem like characters out of opéra bouffe.

If one were going to cast a rock star in a production of "Threepenny," the Ballad Singer would have been the role for him, and Tom Waits, whose own work has a touch of Weill, would probably have been your man. But Waits' voice and persona are too harsh, too scruffy, too sinister—in short, too much in keeping with the style of the work itself—for Dexter's purpose, which seems to have been to insure patrons a lighthearted and amusing evening in the theatre. Dexter misses every opportunity to bring the theme of poverty to the fore. (Jocelyn Herbert's set and costumes might have been borrowed from the last revival of "Oliver!"—all except for the outfits she has designed for the whores, which seem inspired by *Hustler*.) Gone are all the menace and the darkly troubling cynicism of the play's message, and the only cynicism on view is that behind the production itself. —MIMI KRAMER

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MUSICAL EVENTS

Brave New Worlds

THE Houston Grand Opera is famous for producing new works: ten of them (including Leonard Bernstein's "A Quiet Place" and John Adams' "Nixon in China") since 1974. The company's latest première was of Michael Tippett's fifth opera, "New Year," which was commissioned jointly by Houston, Glyndebourne, and the BBC, and received its first performance on October 27th. Like its four predecessors—"The Midsummer Marriage," "King Priam," "The Knot Garden," and "The Ice Break"—"New Year" is an unconventional work, individual to the point of eccentricity. Like them, it provides an evening of musical and emotional high adventure. After "The Ice Break" (which was performed in London in 1977, and in Boston two years later), Tippett thought that he would compose no more operas. He went on to write the Fourth Symphony (for Chicago), the Fourth String Quartet, the Triple Concerto, the big oratorio "The Mask of Time" (for Boston), the Fourth Piano Sonata. But then "New Year," he says, insisted on being composed. It sounds like late work—Tippett will be eighty-five in January—only in its assurance and its conciseness. (The three acts lasted forty-two, twenty-seven, and thirty-six minutes.) It is fresh, urgent, and strong.

From the start, Tippett has been his own librettist. All his operas except "King Priam" have contemporary settings, with imagery drawn at once from contemporary life and from the composer's reading, his dreaming, and, latterly, his television-watching. "The Midsummer Marriage" and "The Knot Garden" are Jungian dramas of conflict—both within and between the characters—and eventual healing. In "The Knot Garden," the freedom fighter Denise brings scars from the fierce world outside into the confines of an English, Woolfian garden. Violence given theatrical and musical enactment counterpoints the personal crises of "The Ice Break." (Scenes of Sarah Caldwell's Boston production were close-matched by photographs in the Boston *Globe* of city riots.) "New Year" gathers ideas from those earlier operas into a new vision. As in "The Midsummer Marriage," ancient equinoctial rites mingle with their modern manifestations: in the second-act finale, a crowd engaged in beating up the Scapegoat (a sacrificial victim chosen by a Shaman borrowed from Angela Carter's "Nights at the Circus") breaks off at the strokes of midnight to sing "Auld Lang Syne." The setting is "Terror Town." The protagonist, Jo Ann ("a trainee children's doctor" who has "majored in child psychology"), had her starting point in the remark of a young Belfast woman that she "wanted out" from the Troubles. The closing lines of the opera—"One humanity; one justice"—are a pop star's outburst at a concert for Nelson Mandela that Tippett watched on television. Between the wanting out and that close, Jo Ann learns to "want *in*": to confront Terror Town and undertake what healing she can. Pelegrin, a handsome tenor from the Future, has arrived in a time-travelling spaceship, invented by one Merlin, to comfort and strengthen her. He transports her to a Sacred Place where the waters of a sweet fountain offer forgetfulness of others' suffering, while those of a bitter lake keep it in mind. She but sips from the former, drains a cup of the latter.

From the start of Tippett's operatic career, his works have been attacked by critics reluctant to see Jungian symbols take shape as stage actuality (even though, heaven knows, after Wagner and after Strauss's "Frau ohne Schatten" such dramaturgy should not prove unacceptable). Jenifer, the heroine of "The Midsummer Marriage," dreamed in girlhood of a stairway leading from base earth to a chaste heaven; on her wedding day, the stairway suddenly materializes onstage; she ascends it and, for a while, disappears. Mark, Jenifer's betrothed, has *earthy elements*: a gateway into the warm, fruitful earth suddenly opens, and he plunges into it. The ordered knot garden of Tippett's third opera sometimes becomes a whirling, sinister labyrinth. In "New Year," it is true, the significance of the science-fiction paraphernalia is less easy to discern. The romance across space and time can be accounted a beautiful mystery, a parable of

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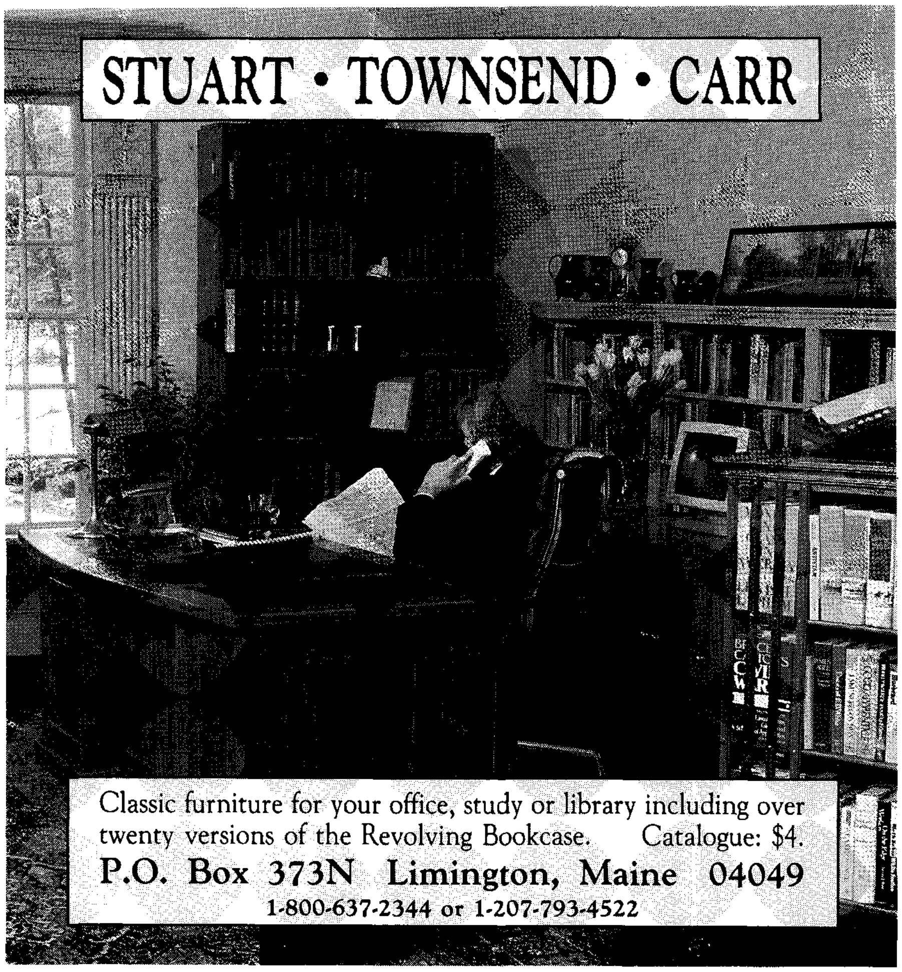
grace, but some of the characters are hard to understand. One personage of the Future is Regan (a dramatic soprano), boss of the space station where Merlin and Pelegrin work. Her roots lie in Shakespeare's eponym, in Rider Haggard's She (who must be obeyed), and perhaps in Britain's ruthless, unfeeling Prime Minister. But how, exactly, this Regan ties in to Jo Ann's tale is something to puzzle over. Another puzzle is how the important character Donny (a light baritone)—a wild, parentless street boy who, like Jo Ann, has been brought up by Nan, a foster mother to both of them—fits into the artistic pattern. For that matter, the character of Nan herself (a dramatic mezzo) remains somewhat obscure. Is she a this-world incarnation of the Terrible Mother (at one point, she describes herself to Regan as "an older, tougher phantom of your past") or just a basically kindly soul at the end of her patience? Still, I enjoy operas that leave me slightly perplexed, that do not reveal all their secrets at the first or even the second encounter—provided, of course, that I feel sure there are secrets to be discovered, further senses to be found. Repeated encounters with Tippett's earlier operas, whose details fall more convincingly into place at each new production, prompt that assurance.

Another feature of the operas that has often been attacked, and with more justice, is the quality of their verse. The opening lines of "New Year" are sung by a character called sometimes the Presenter, sometimes just Voice. Shorn of choral echoes, the lines read:

Our world is wicked
So they say, so they say.
Our times are cruel,
So they say.
And we are monkeys in a circus
So they say, so they say.
Then give the world a kick oop't arse,
So that we may
Come to know laughter and forgetting
One day
Dance, dance, dance little lady
And little manny too,
Dance the night and night's nightmare
On fire-fly feet, away.

It seems that there is nothing to be done about the diction and the reckless allusiveness of Tippett's texts but to accept them for the sake of the music they are designed to support. It is T. S. Eliot's fault: when Tippett, half a century ago, approached the poet about writing a libretto for the oratorio "A



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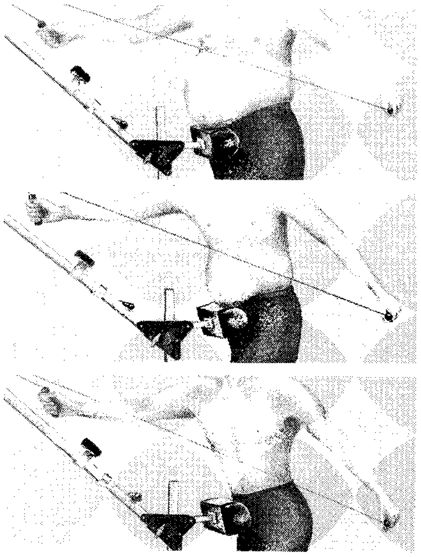

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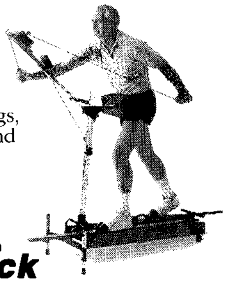

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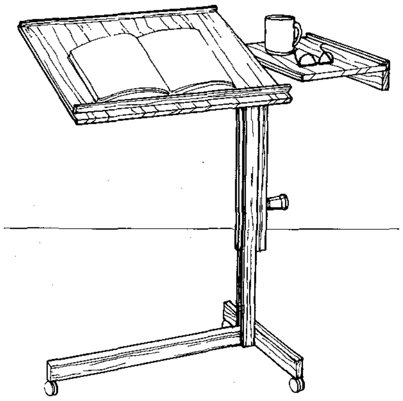

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Child of Our Time" and produced sketches of the kind of thing he needed, Eliot advised him to write his own text. An essay in Tippett's collection "Music of the Angels" tells how he went to work, quarrying, borrowing, conjoining, forging: "The dramatic and even philosophic material which the music had to 'swallow' was entirely embedded in the gradually forming musical apprehensions from the very start."

It would be easy to say that all that really matters is the music, and truer to say that, while the music is the most important element, it is the compounding of the lyrical melodies, wonderful sounds, and strong forms with the richly extravagant stage imagery and magpie verses which makes Tippett's operas strangely rewarding. What seems at first, textually and dramatically, a right old muddle may prove to be exactly what the tautly planned scores required. In any case, there is something so warm, so generous, so romantic about Tippett's promiscuously inclusive visions—even at their quirkiest, even when sentimentality is close at hand—that it is hard not to love them. The score of "New Year" includes rap, touches of reggae, and, associated with the spaceship and the Sacred Place, some rather cliché electronic sounds, but most of the music is lyrical. The opera opens on one of Tippett's stirring, wide-spaced five-note chords, which recurs often, always recognizable, always pregnant. A quartet within the second-act finale is particularly beautiful: muted horn calls in E-flat, with softly pressed dissonances, begin it, over a low string F; then other instruments add lines to the enchanted, melismatic web that four singers, in suggested or sometimes true canon, are weaving. The love music for Jo Ann and Pelegrin is always moving. Several pages recall the ecstatic counterpoints of "The Midsummer Marriage," but the copious execution of that opera is tempered by the leaner, refined manners and the abrupt, transitionless shifts of the later works. This is personal music, hard to describe, readily communicative.

The Houston performance was conducted by John DeMain, directed by Peter Hall, designed by Alison Chitty, and distinguished by the Jo Ann of Helen Field. With instinct and intelligence combined, Miss Field (who has sung Jenifer for the English National

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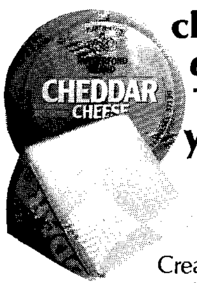

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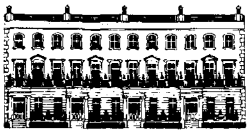

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Opera) found her way to the heart of the heroine's phrases and made them eloquent. She is a true, pure lyric soprano, a delicate artist, and a compelling actress. The others were strong singers (with the exception of Voice, John Schiappa, who, though heavily amplified, seemed almost voiceless), but they appeared to have little idea what they were about. Richetta Manager (Regan) made gleaming sounds. Peter Kazaras (Pelegrin) was full-toned but inexpressive; he showed no feeling for Jo Ann. The dancing and the singing of Krister St. Hill (Donny) were energetic and confident. Jane Shaulis (Nan)—a late replacement for an ailing Felicity Palmer—was sure but oddly stolid. James Maddalena made something enigmatic but pleasing of Merlin. Sir Peter directed the première of "The Knot Garden," in 1970, with certainty, grace, and intensity. Every move told. But "New Year" took the stage, it seemed, with its characters undefined, and uncertain how to relate one to another. Little was finely worked or revealingly imaginative, and much was clumsy. Even a simple but symbolically important conjuring trick—a rose vanishing from Jo Ann's hand, to reappear, later, in Pelegrin's—was amateurishly executed. Miss Chitty's décor was unmagical—her spaceship a mere elevator cage descending from the flies. The important dances were conventionally choreographed, by Bill T. Jones. The opera was performed in the Cullen Theatre, the less large house of Houston's new Wortham Center. Its orchestra pit was set very deep; rare and lovely instrumental sounds were muted; and the players (of the Houston Symphony) seemed out of touch with the singers.

SPICED PEARS
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TG

A disappointing performance, then—but not a disappointing opera. I saw the first two of seven performances that were given, and at the second of them things began to move rather better. An introduction to the libretto tells us that "the main characters of 'New Year' are, in their different ways, striving to realise their dreams." This is Tippett's new, radiant vision of hope and love.

THIS première—which drew managers, critics, and enthusiasts from across the world to Houston—formed part of a British Opera Festival. The other presentations were Jonathan Miller's staging of "The Mikado," first given at the English National in 1986 (I saw it then and had no wish to see it again), and Nicholas Hytner's staging of Handel's "Giulio Cesare," first given at the Paris Opera in 1987 (which I very much wanted to see). This was Mr. Hytner's American début. (His production of "King Priam" for Kent Opera is published on videotape, and it comes this season to Covent Garden, where last year he produced "The Knot Garden." The Paris "Cesare" was preceded by a much admired "Serse" for the English National.) At Purchase and then in Boston, Peter Sellars directed a wonderful "Cesare," at once high-spirited and very serious. The Met, last year, put on a heavy, drably decorative production, borrowed from the English National. Mr. Hytner's staging was light, crisp, elegant, and very attractive. So was David Fielding's décor. Although the scenes are large (Covent Garden found them too large for its stage when it considered borrowing the production), they are economical, witty, and beautiful. And they were very well lit by Davy Cunningham.

Winton Dean has described Handel's drama, played out amid high politics, as "preoccupied with the passions of youth" and "infused with a delicate irony." Passion is "uninhibited by the shadow of matrimony," and "it is as Virtue that Cleopatra disguises herself in order to seduce Caesar." Mr. Hytner evidently agrees. Sometimes he was *too* playful: there were moments of unbecoming mirth in Cleopatra's enchanted, seductive "V'adoro, pupille," and there was much larkiness during Caesar's infatuated response to it—the nightingale aria "Se in fiorito ameno prato," with a solo violinist in emulant concert. The show, with its touches of quizzical detachment, could be considered a corrective to overearnest or exaggerated Handelian claims. Now that we know "Cesare" to be a profound and penetrating drama, it is easy to enjoy a production where complete seriousness is reserved for the tragic episodes: Caesar's "Alma del gran

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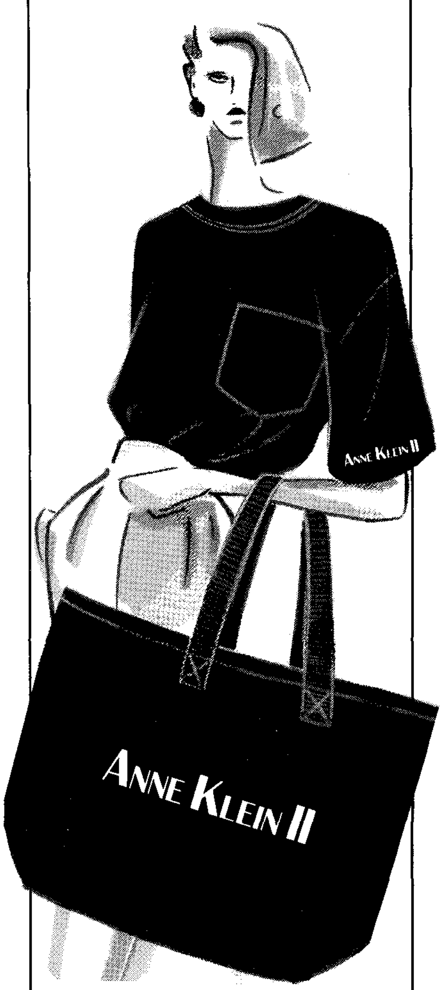

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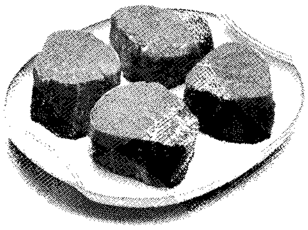
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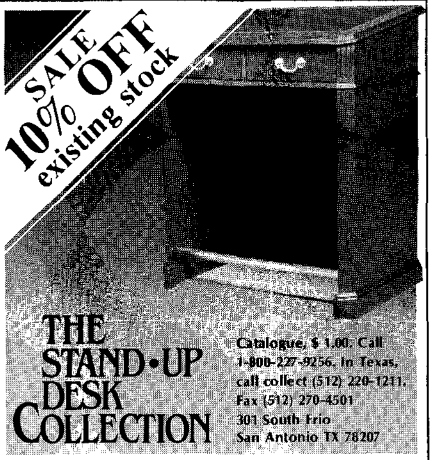
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Pompeo" ("So might Shakespeare, had he been a musician, have soliloquized on the fragile thread from which the most heroic life depends," says Dean), Cornelia's "Nel tuo seno," Cleopatra's "Piangerò." Particularly when the production is as stylishly conceived and executed as this one was.

The "Cesare" cast knew what it was about. Valerie Masterson was in peak form, a fresh, youthful, sparkling Cleopatra: again and again, her resourceful, exquisite phrasing touched nerves of pleasure. Jochen Kowalski was to have made his American dêbut in the title role; on his withdrawal, Graham Pushee (who sang the part in Paris) took over, and he gave a polished performance. Eirian James was an ardent and accurate young Sextus, Christopher Robson a fluent and subtle young Ptolemy. Among the principals, only Katherine Ciesinski, the Cornelia, had a voice insufficiently disciplined for Handel; her powerful presence and interpretation were compensation. Nirenus was star-cast: the nimble, quick-witted Dominique Visse, a Cuénod of countertenors. Originally, the role had no arias, but Mr. Visse was allotted one that Handel added to a revival in which Cleopatra's eunuch Nirenus became her handmaid Nirena. Five arias were omitted. Sextus' "Cara speme," an inspired last-minute addition of Handel's, was the saddest loss. Losing his "La giustizia" mattered less—Handel himself dropped the number from all revivals—except in that it meant we heard less of the delightful Miss James. Cornelia lost "Cessa omai." Achillas, a three-aria bass role, retained just one A section. Several other arias were reduced to A section only. Nicholas McGegan, who was to have conducted, withdrew; Craig Smith, who led the Purchase and Boston "Cesare," took over. He is a loving Handelian, but the manner of the show called for springier musical direction. The opera was given in Houston's larger house, the Brown Theatre, and its more open pit allowed better balance between the singers and the players.

—ANDREW PORTER

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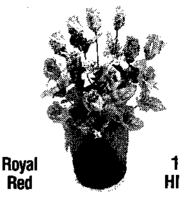
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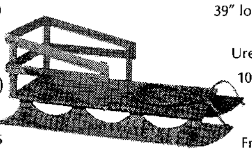
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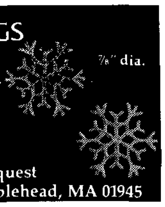
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A CRITIC AT LARGE

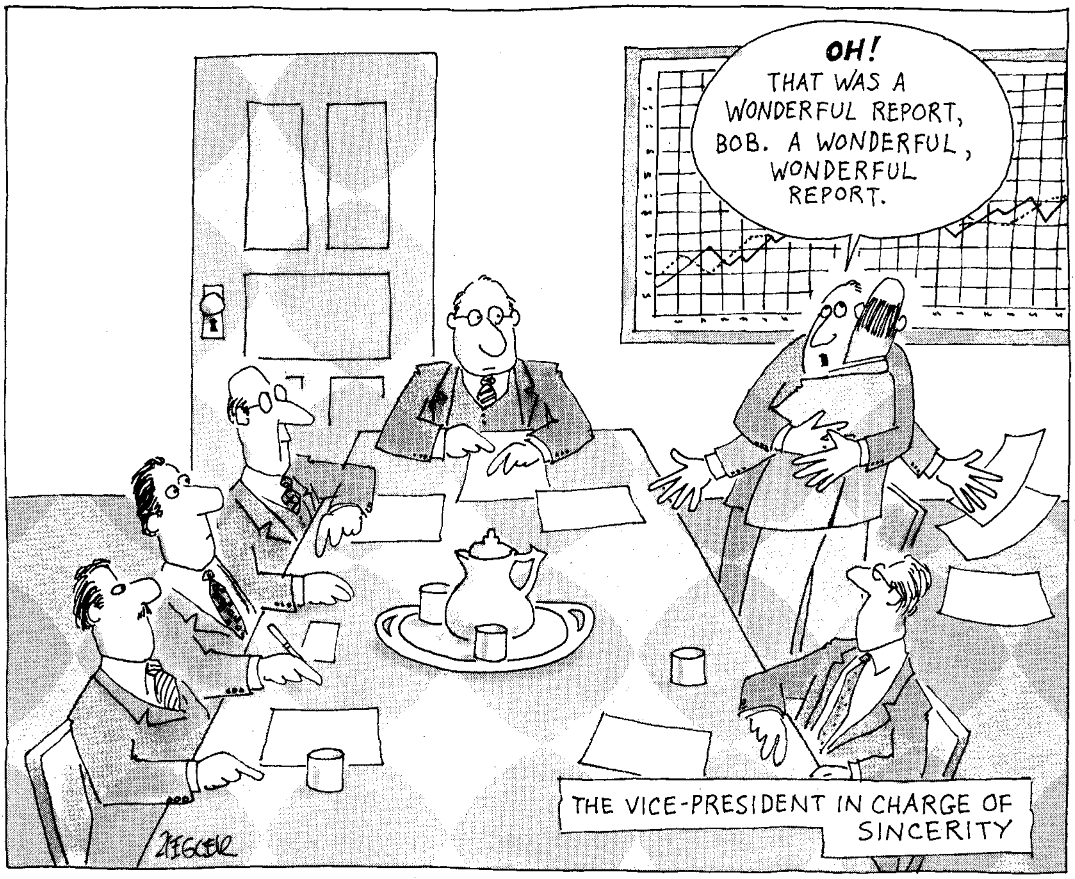
T. S. ELIOT AT 101

THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT, poet and preëminent modernist, was born one hundred and one years ago. In 1988, his centennial was suitably marked by commemorative reporting, literary celebrations in New York and London, and the publication of a couple of lavishly reviewed volumes: a new biography and a collection of the poet's youthful letters. Probably not much more could have been done to distinguish the occasion; still, there was something subdued and bloodless, even superannuated, about these memorial stirrings. They had the quality of a slightly tedious reunion of aging alumni, mostly spiritless by now but spurred to animation by exultation recollected in tranquillity. The only really fresh excitement took place in London, where representatives of the usually docile community of British Jews, including at least one prominent publisher, condemned Eliot for anti-Semitism and protested the public fuss. Elsewhere, the moment passed modestly, and was hardly noticed by the bookish young—who, whether absorbed by recondite theorizing in the academy or scampering after newfangled writing careers, have long had their wagons hitched to other stars.

In the early seventies, it was still possible to uncover, here and there, a tenacious English Department offering a vestigial graduate seminar given over to the study of Eliot. But by the close of the eighties only "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" appears to have survived the indifference of the schools—as two or three pages in the anthologies, a fleeting assignment for high-school seniors and college freshmen. "Prufrock," and "Prufrock" alone, is what the latest generations know (barely know): not "The Hollow Men," not "La Figlia che Piange," not "Ash Wednesday"—not even "The Waste Land." Never "Four Quartets." And the mammoth prophetic presence of T. S. Eliot himself—that immortal, sovereign rock—the latest generations do not know at all.

To anyone who was an undergraduate in the forties or the fifties (or possibly even in the first years of the sixties), all that is inconceivable—as if a part of the horizon had crumbled away. When, four decades ago, in a literary period that resembled eternity, T. S. Eliot won the Nobel Prize in Literature, he seemed pure zenith, a colossus, nothing less than a permanent luminary, fixed in the firmament like the sun and the moon—or like the New Criticism, the vanished movement he once magisterially dominated. For the literary young, it was a time that mixed authority with innovation: authority *was* innovation—an idea that reads now, in the wake of the anti-establishment sixties, like the simplest contradiction. But modernism was then an absolute ruler—it had no effective intellectual competition and had routed all its predecessors—and it was modernism that famously carried the "new."

The new—as embodied in Eliot—was difficult: preoccupied by parody and pastiche, exactingly allusive and complex, saturated in manifold ironies and inflections, composed of "layers," and pointedly inaccessible to anybody expecting run-of-the-mill coherence. The doors to Eliot's poetry were not easily opened. His lines and themes were not readily understood. But the young flung themselves through those portals, lured by unfamiliar enchantments and bound by pleasurable ribbons of ennui. "April is the cruel-lest month"—Eliot's voice, with its sepulchral cadences, came spiralling out of student phonographs—"breeding/ Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing/ Memory and desire." That tony British accent—flat, precise, steady, unemotive, surprisingly high-pitched, bleakly passive—coiled through awed English Departments and worshipful dormitories, rooms where the walls had pinup Picassos, and where Pound and Eliot and "Ulysses" and Proust jostled one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another higgledy-piggledy in the rapt late-adolescent breast. The voice was, like the poet himself, nearly sacerdotal; it was impersonal, winding and winding across the country's campuses like a spool of blank robotic woe. "Shantih shantih shantih," "not with a bang but a whimper," "an old man in a dry month," "I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled": these were the devout chants of the literarily passionate in the forties and fifties, who in their own first verses piously copied Eliot's tone—its restraint, gravity, mystery, its invasive remoteness and immobilized, disjointed despair.

There was rapture in that despair. Wordsworth's nostalgic cry over the start of the French Revolution—"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,/ But to be young was very heaven!"—belongs, no doubt, to every new generation; youth's heaven lies in its quitting, or sometimes spiting, the past, with or without a historical crisis. And though Eliot's impress—the bliss he evoked—had little to do with political rupture, it was revolutionary in its own way. The young who gave homage to Eliot were engaged in a self-contradictory double maneuver: they were willingly authoritarian even as they jubilantly rebelled. On the one hand, taking on the puzzlements of modernism, they were out to tear down the Wordsworthian tradition itself, and, on the other, they were ready to fall on their knees to a god. A god, moreover, who despised freethinking, democracy, and secularism—the very conditions of anti-authoritarianism.

How T. S. Eliot became that god—or, to put it less extravagantly, how he became a commanding literary figure, who had no successful rivals, and whose formulations were in fact revered—is almost as mysterious as how in the flash of half a lifetime an immutable majesty was dismantled, an immutable glory dissipated. It is almost impossible nowadays to imagine such authority accruing to a poet. No writer today—whether or not a Nobel winner—holds it or can hold it. The four Nobel laureates in literature living in America—Czeslaw Milosz, Saul Bellow, Isaac Bashevis Singer, and Joseph Brodsky (three of whom, though citizens of long standing, do not write primarily in English)—are much honored, but they are not looked to for manifestos or pronouncements, and their comments are not studied as if by a haruspex. They are as far from being cultural dictators as they are from filling football stadiums.

Eliot *did* once fill a football stadium. On April 30, 1956, fourteen thousand people came to hear him lecture on "The Frontiers of Criticism" at the University of Minnesota stadium, in Minneapolis. By then, he was solidly confirmed as "the Pope of Russell Square"—the title his London admirer Mary Trevelyan had given him in 1949. It was a far-reaching papacy, effective even among students in the American Midwest; but if the young flocked to genuflect before the papal throne it was not they who had enthroned Eliot, nor was it their teachers. In the Age of Criticism (as the donnish "little" magazines of the time dubbed the forties and fifties), Eliot was ceded power, and accorded veneration, by critics who were themselves minor luminaries. "He has a very penetrating influence, perhaps not unlike an east wind," wrote William Empson, one of whose titles, "Seven Types of Ambiguity," became an academic catchphrase alongside Eliot's famous "objective correlative." R. P. Blackmur said of "Prufrock" that its "obscurity is like that of the womb"; Eliot's critical essays, he claimed, bore a "vital relation" to Aristotle's "Poetics." Hugh Kenner's comparison is with another monument—"Eliot's work, as he once noted of Shakespeare's, is in important respects one continuous poem"—and for Kenner the shape of Eliot's own monument turned out to be "the Arch which stands when the last marcher has left, and endures when the last centurion or sergeant-major is dust." F. R. Leavis, declaring Eliot "among the greatest poets of the English language," remarked that "to have gone seriously into the poetry is to have had a quickening insight into the nature of thought and language." And in Eliot's hands, F. O. Matthiessen explained, the use of the symbol can "create the illusion that it is giving expression to the very mystery of life."

These evocations of wind, womb, thought and language, the dust of the ages, and the very mystery of life, to say nothing of the ghosts of Aristotle and Shakespeare: not since Dr. Johnson has a man of letters writing in English been received with so much adulation, or seemed so formidable—almost a marvel of nature itself—within his own society.

Nevertheless, there was an occasional dissenter. As early as 1929, Edmund Wilson was complaining that he couldn't stomach Eliot's celebrated conversion to "classicism, royalism, and Anglo-Catholicism." While Wilson granted that Eliot's essays "will be read by everybody interested in literature," that Eliot "has now become perhaps the most important literary critic in the English-speaking world," and, finally, that "one can find no figure of comparable authority," it was exactly the force of this influence that made him "fear that we must give up hope." For Wilson, the argument of Eliot's followers "that, because our society at the present time is badly off without religion, we should make an heroic effort to swallow medieval theology, seems . . . utterly futile as well as fundamentally dishonest." Twenty-five years later, when the American intellectual center had completed its shift from free-lance literary work like Wilson's—and Eliot's—to the near-uniformity of university English Departments, almost no one in those departments would dare to voice such unfastidious thoughts about Eliot. A glaze of orthodoxy (not so very different from the preoccupation with deconstructive theory currently orthodox in many English Departments) settled over academe. Given the normal eagerness of succeeding literary generations to examine new sets of entrails, it was inevitable that so unmitigated a dedication would in time falter and decline. But until that happened, decades on, Eliot studies were an unstoppable torrent.

It may be embarrassing for us now to look back at that nearly universal obeisance to an autocratic, inhibited, depressed, rather narrow-minded, and considerably bigoted fake Englishman—especially if we are old enough (as I surely am) to have been part of the wave of adoration. In his person, if not in his poetry, Eliot was, after all, false coinage. Born in St. Louis, he became indistinguishable (though not to shrewd native English eyes), in his dress, his manners, his loyalties, from a

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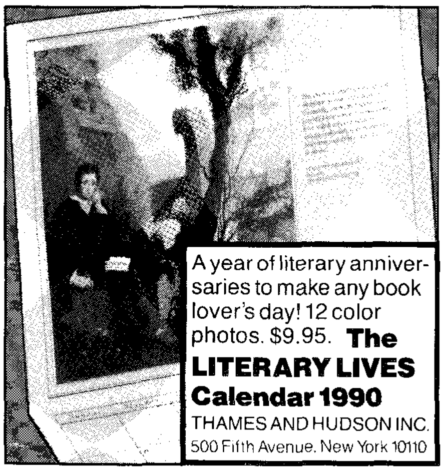
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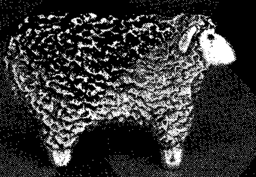
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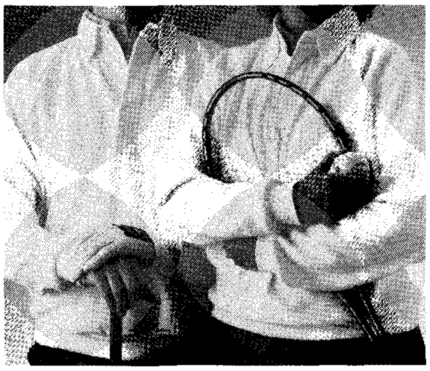
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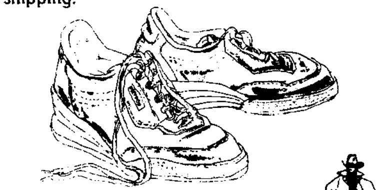

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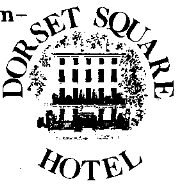

proper British Tory. Scion of undoctrinaire, rationalist New England Unitarianism (his grandfather had moved from Boston to Missouri to found Washington University), he was possessed by guilty notions of sinfulness and martyrdom and by the monkish disciplines of asceticism, which he pursued in the unlikely embrace of the established English church. No doubt Eliot's extreme self-alterations should not be dismissed as ordinary humbug—particularly not on the religious side. There is a difference between impersonation and conversion. Still, such unalloyed self-alteration suggests a hatred of the original design. And certainly Eliot condemned the optimism of democratic American meliorism; certainly he despised Unitarianism, centered less on personal salvation than on the social good; certainly he had contempt for Jews as marginal, if not inimical, to his concept of Christian community. But most of all he came to loathe himself, a hollow man in a twilight kingdom.

IN my undergraduate years, between seventeen and twenty-one, and long afterward as well, I had no inkling of any of this. The overt flaws—the handful of insults in the poetry—I swallowed without protest. No one I knew protested; at any rate, no professor ever did. If Eliot included lines like "The rats are underneath the piles./ The jew [sic] is underneath the lot," if he had his Bleistein—"Chicago Semite Viennese"—stare "from the protozoic slime," while elsewhere "the jew squats on the window sill, the owner," and "Rachel *née* Rabinovitch/ Tears at the grapes with murderous paws"—well, that, sadly, was the way of the world and to be expected, even in the most resplendent poet of the age. The sting of those phrases—the shock that sickened—passed, and the reader's heart pressed on to be stirred by other lines. What was Eliot to me? He was not the crack about "Money in furs," or "Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp." No, Eliot was "The Lady is withdrawn/ In a white gown, to contemplation, in a white gown," and "Then spoke the thunder/DA/ *Datta:* what have we given?" and "Afternoon grey and smoky, evening yellow and rose"; he was incantation, mournfulness, elegance; he was liquescence, he was staccato, he was quickstep and oar, the hushed moan and the sudden clap. He was lyric shudder and roseburst. He was, in brief, poetry incarnate; and poetry was what one lived for.

And he was something else besides. He was, to say it quickly, absolute art: high art, when art was at its most serious and élitist. The knowledge of that particular splendor—priestly, sacral, a golden cape for the initiate—has by now ebbed out of the world, and many do not regret it. Literary high art turned its back on egalitarianism, and prized what is nowadays scorned as "the canon": that body of anciently esteemed texts, most of them difficult and aristocratic in origin, which has been designated Western culture. Modernism—and Eliot—teased the canon, bruised it, and even sought to astonish it by mocking and fragmenting it, and also by introducing into it Eastern infusions, such as Eliot's phrases from the Upanishads in "The Waste Land," and Pound's Chinese imitations. But all these shatterings, dislocations, and idiosyncratic juxtapositions of the old literary legacies were never intended to abolish the honor in which they were held, and only confirmed their centrality. Undoing the canon is the work of a later time—of our own, in fact, when universal assent to a central cultural standard is almost everywhere decried. For the moderns, and for Eliot especially, the denial of permanently agreed-on masterworks—what Matthew Arnold called "touchstones," a notion now obsolete beyond imagining—would have been unthinkable. What one learned from Eliot, whose poetry skittered toward disintegration, was the power of consolidation: the understanding that literature could genuinely *reign*.

One learned also that a poem could actually be penetrated to its marrow, though that was not quite the same as comprehending its meaning. In shunting aside or giving up certain goals of ordinary reading, the New Criticism installed Eliot as both teacher and subject. For instance, the New Criticism, following Eliot, would not allow a poem to be read in the light of either biography or psychology. The poem was to be regarded as a thing-in-itself; nothing environmental or causal—not even its own maker—was permitted to illuminate or explain it. In that sense, it was as impersonal as a jar or any other shapely artifact that must be judged purely by its externals. This objective approach to a poem, deriving from

Eliot's celebrated objective-correlative formulation, did not dismiss emotion; rather, it kept emotion at a distance, and precluded any speculation about the poet's own life or any other likely influence on the poem. "The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality," Eliot wrote in his landmark essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent." "Emotion . . . has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet." And, most memorably, "The more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates." This was a theory designed to prevent old-fashioned attempts to read private events into the lines on the page. Not that Eliot's formulation was altogether new. Henry James, too, had demanded ("Dramatize, dramatize!") that the work of art resist construing itself in public. When Eliot, in offering his objective correlative, stopped to speak of the "*données* of the problem"—*donnée* was one of James's pet Gallicisms—he was tipping us off to his source. No literary figure among James's contemporaries had paid any attention to this modernist dictum—often not even James himself. Emerging in far more abstruse language from Eliot, it became a papal bull. He was thirty-one at the time.

The method used in digging out the objective correlative had a Gallic name of its own: *explication de texte*. The sloughing off of what the New Criticism considered extraneous had the effect of freeing the poem utterly—freeing it for the undistracted mind of the reader, who was released from "psychology" and similar blind alleys in order to master the poem's components. The New Criticism held the view that a poem could indeed be mastered: such mastery was an act of trust, as it were, between poem and reader. The poem could be relied on to yield itself up to the reader if the reader, on the other side of the bargain, would agree to a minutely close *explication*, phrase by phrase: a process far more meticulous than "interpretation" or the search for any identifiable meaning or definitive commentary. The search was, rather, for architecture and texture—or call it resonance and intricacy, the responsive webwork between the words.

A generation or more was initiated into this concentrated scrutiny of a poem's structure and movement. High

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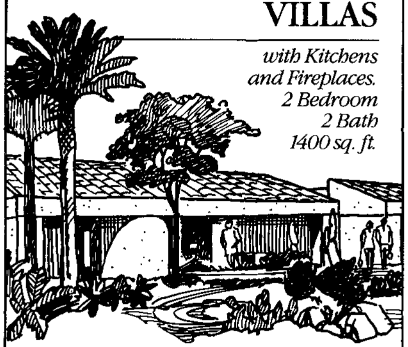

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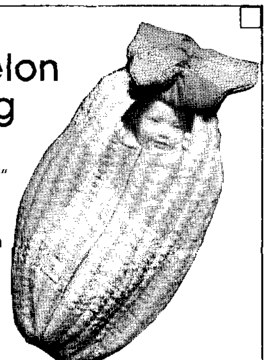

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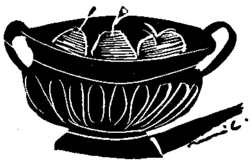
art in literature—which had earlier been approached through the kind of impressionistic "appreciations" that commonly passed for critical reading before the New Criticism took hold—was now seen to be indivisible from *explication de texte*. And though the reverence for high art that characterized the Eliot era is now antiquated—or dead—the close reading that was the hallmark of the New Critics has survived, and remains the sine qua non of all schools of literary theory. Currently, it is being applied even to popular culture; hamburger advertisements and television sitcoms can be serious objects of up-to-date critical examination. Eliot was hugely attracted to popular culture as an innovative ingredient of pastiche; "Sweeney Agonistes," an unfinished verse drama, is saturated in it. For Eliot and the New Critics, however, popular culture, or "low taste," contributed to a literary technique; it would scarcely have served as a literary subject, or "text," in its own right. Élitism ruled. Art was expected to be strenuous, hard-earned, knotty. Eliot explicitly said so, and the New Critics faithfully concurred. "It is not a permanent necessity that poets should be interested in philosophy," Eliot wrote (though he himself had been a graduate student in philosophy at Harvard and Oxford, and had completed a thesis on F. H. Bradley, the British idealist). "We can only say that it appears likely that poets in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be *difficult*. Our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results. The poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning."



He had another requirement as well, and that was a receptiveness to history. Complexity could be present only when historical consciousness prevailed. He favored history over novelty, and tradition over invention. While praising William Blake for "a remarkable and original sense of language and the music of language, and a gift of hallucinated vision," Eliot faulted him for his departures from the historical mainstream: "What his genius required, and what it sadly lacked, was a framework of accepted and traditional ideas which would have prevented him from indulging in a philosophy of his own." And he concluded, "The concentration resulting from a framework of mythology and theology and philosophy is one of the reasons why Dante is a classic, and Blake only a poet of genius." Genius was not enough for Eliot. A poet, he said in "Tradition and the Individual Talent," needs to be "directed by the past." The historical sense "compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order."

A grand view; a view of grandeur; high art defined—so high that even the sublime Blake fails to meet its measure. It is all immensely elevated and noble—and, given the way many literary academics and critics think now, rare and alien. Aristocratic ideas of this kind, which some might call Eurocentric and obscurantist, no longer engage most literary intellectuals; nor did they, sixty years ago, engage Edmund Wilson. But they were dominant for decades, and in the reign of Eliot they were law. Like other postulates, they brought good news and bad news, and we know that my good news may well be your bad news. Probably the only legacy of the Eliot era that everyone can affirm as enduringly valuable is the passionate, yet also disinterested, dissection of the text—a nuanced skill that no critical reader, taking whatever ideological stand, can do without. All the rest is disagreement. As I see it, what appeared important to me at twenty-one is still important; in some respects, I admit to being arrested in the Age of Eliot, a permanent member of it, unregenerate. The etiolation of high art seems to me to be a major loss. I continue to suppose that some texts are worthier than other texts. The same holds for the diminishment of history and tradition: not to incorporate into an educable mind the origins and unifying principles of one's own civilization strikes me as a kind of cultural autolobotomy. Nor am I ready to relinquish Eliot's stunning declaration that the reason we know so much more than the dead writers knew is

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that "they are that which we know." As for that powerful central body of touchstone works, the discredited canon, and Eliot's strong role in shaping it for his own and the following generation, it remains clear to me that—as Susan Sontag remarked at the 1986 International PEN Congress—literary genius is not an equal-opportunity employer; I would not wish to drop Homer or Jane Austen or Kafka to make room for an Aleutian Islander of lesser gifts, unrepresented though her group may be on the college reading list.

In today's lexicon, these are no doubt "conservative" notions, for which Eliot's influence can be at least partly blamed or—depending on your viewpoint—credited. In Eliot himself they have a darker side—the bad news. And the bad news is very bad. The gravity of high art led Eliot to envision a controlling and exclusionary society that could, presumably, supply the conditions to produce such art. These doctrinal tendencies, expressed in 1939 in a little book called "The Idea of a Christian Society," took Eliot—on the eve of Nazi Germany's ascendancy over Europe—to the very lip of shutting out, through "radical changes," anyone he might consider ineligible for his "Community of Christians." Lamenting "the intolerable position of those who try to lead a Christian life in a non-Christian world," he was indifferent to the position of those who would try to thrive as a cultural minority within his contemplated Utopia. (This denigration of tolerance was hardly fresh. He had argued in a lecture six years before that he had "no objection to being called a bigot.") In the same volume, replying to a certain Miss Bower, who had frowned on "one of the main tenets of the Nazi creed—the relegation of women to the sphere of the kitchen, the children, and the church," Eliot protested "the implication that what is Nazi is wrong, and need not be discussed on its own merits." Nine years afterward, when the fight against Germany was won, he published "Notes Towards the Definition of Culture," again proposing the hegemony of a common religious culture. Here he wrote—at a time when Hitler's ovens were only recently cooled and the meaning of the Final Solution was just dawning—that "the scattering of Jews amongst peoples holding the Christian Faith . . . may

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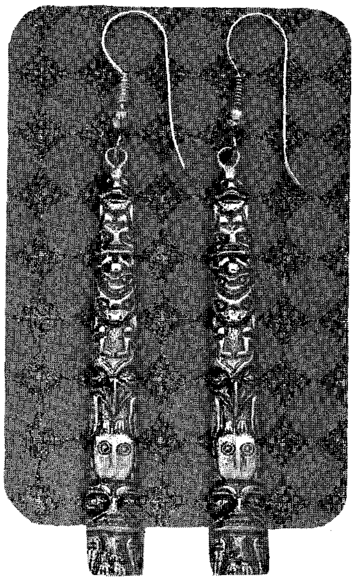

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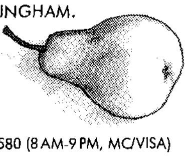

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have *been unfortunate both for these* peoples and for the Jews themselves," because "the effect may have been to strengthen the illusion that there can be culture without religion." An extraordinary postwar comment. And in an appendix, "The Unity of European Culture"—a series of radio lectures broadcast to Germany in 1946, one year after the Reich was dismantled, with Europe in upheaval, the death camps exposed, and displaced persons everywhere—he *made no mention* at all of the German atrocities. The only reference to "barbarism" was hypothetical, a worried projection into a potentially barren future—"If Christianity goes, the whole of our culture goes"—as if the best of European civilization (including the merciful tenets of Christianity) had not already been pulverized to ash throughout the previous decade. So much for where high art and traditional culture landed Eliot.

THERE is bad news, as it happens, even in the objective correlative. What was once accepted as an austere principle of poetics is suddenly decipherable as no more than a device to shield the poet from the raw shame of confession. Eliot is now unveiled as a confessional poet above all—one who was driven to confess, who *did* confess, whose subject was sin and guilt (his *own*)—but *one who had no heart for* the act of disclosure. That severe law of the impersonality of the poem—the masking technique purported to displace emotion from its crude source in the poet's real-life experience and transform it to its heightened incarnation in "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events"—turns out to be motivated by something less august and more timorous than pure literary theory or a devotion to symbol. In the name of the objective correlative Eliot had found a way to describe the wound without suffering the embarrassment of divulging who had held the knife. This was a conception not so immaculate as the practitioners of the New Criticism had supposed; for thirty years or more, Eliot's close readers remained innocent of—or discreet about—Eliot's private life. Perhaps some of them imagined that, like the other pope, he had none.

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in the ordinary way: the biographies began. They began because time, which dissolves everything, at last dissolved awe. Although the number of critical examinations of Eliot, both book-length and in periodicals, is beyond counting, and although there are a handful of memoirs by people who were acquainted with him, the first true biography did not appear until 1977, a dozen years after his death. That year, Lyndall Gordon published "Eliot's Early Years," an accomplished and informative study taking Eliot past his failed first marriage and through the composition of "The Waste Land." Infiltrated by the familiar worshipfulness, the book is a tentative hybrid—part dense critical scrutiny and part cautious narrative. The constraints of awe are still there. Nevertheless, the poetry is advanced in the light of Eliot's personal religious development, and these first illuminations are potent. In 1984, a second biography arrived, covering the life entire; by then, awe had been fully dispatched. Peter Ackroyd's "T. S. Eliot: A Life" is thorough, bold, and relaxed about its boldness—even now and then a little acid. Not a debunking job by any means, but admirably straightforward. The effect is to bring Eliot down to recognizably human scale—an effect disorienting to a reader trained to Eliot-adulation and ignorant until now of the nightmare of Eliot's youthful marriage and its devastating evolution. Four years later, Eliot's centenary saw the publication of "Eliot's New Life," Lyndall Gordon's concluding volume, containing augmented portraits—in the nature of discoveries—of two women whom Ackroyd had touched on much less intensively; each had expected Eliot to marry her following the death of his wife, in a mental institution. Eliot was callous to both. Eleven years after her first study, Gordon's manner continues respectful and her matter comprehensive, but the diffidence of the earlier narrative chapters is gone. Eliot has acquired fallibility, and Gordon is not afraid to startle herself or the long, encrusted history of deferential Eliot scholarship. Volume II is daring, strong, and psychologically brilliant. Finally, 1988 also marked the issuance of a fat book of letters, "The Letters of T. S. Eliot, Volume I: 1898-1922," from childhood to age thirty-four (with more to come), edited by Eliot's widow, Valerie

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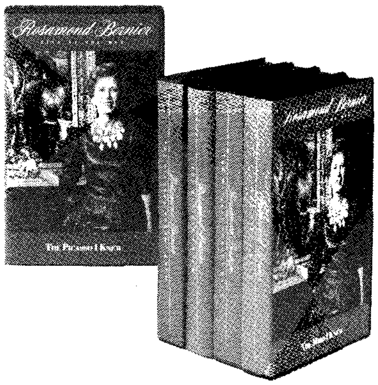

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• •

Eliot, whom he married when she was thirty and he sixty-eight.

"The man who suffers and the mind which creates"—these inseparables, sundered long ago by Eliot himself, can now be surgically united.

IF Eliot hid his private terrors behind the hedge of his poetry, the course of literary history took no notice of it. Adoration, fame, and the Nobel Prize came to him neither in spite of nor because of what he left out; his craft lay in the *way* he left things out. And he had always been reticent; he had always hidden himself. It can, in fact, be argued that he went to live in England in order to hide from his mother and father.

His mother, Charlotte Stearns Eliot, was a frustrated poet: she wrote religious verse and worked for the civic good. His father, Henry Ware Eliot, was an affluent businessman who ran a St. Louis brick-manufacturing company; like any entrepreneur, he liked to see results. His father's father, an intellectual admired by Dickens, was good at results—though not the conventional kind. He left the family seat in blue-blood Boston to take the enlightenment of Unitarianism to the American West; while he was at it, he established a university. Both of Eliot's parents were strong-willed. Both expected him to make a success of himself. Both tended to diminish his independence. Not that they wanted his success on any terms but his own; it was early understood that this youngest of six children (four sisters, the eldest of whom was nineteen years older, and a brother almost a decade his senior) was unusually gifted. He was the sort of introspective child who is photographed playing the piano or reading a book or watching his girl cousins at croquet (while himself wearing a broad-brimmed straw hat and a frilly dress, unremarkable garb for nineteenth-century upper-class male tots). His mother wrote to the headmaster of his prep school to insure that he would not be allowed to participate in strenuous sports. She wrote again to warn against the dangers of swimming in quarry ponds. She told Eliot that his schoolboy verse was better than her own, and guaranteed his unease. "I knew what her verse meant to her. We did not discuss the matter further," he admitted long afterward. At his Harvard commencement, in 1910, the same year as the composition of "Portrait of a Lady" and a year before "Prufrock," he delivered a farewell ode written in a style that may have been a secret parody of his mother's: "For the hour that is left us Fair Harvard, with thee, / Ere we face the importunate years . . . " His mother was sympathetic to his ambitions as a poet—too sympathetic. It was almost as if his ambitions were hers, or vice versa. His father took a brisk view of Eliot's graduate studies in philosophy: they were the ticket to a Harvard professorship, a recognizably respectable career.

But Eliot would not stay put. To the bewilderment of his parents—the thought of it gave his mother a "chill"—he ran off to Paris, later in 1910, partly to catch the atmosphere of Jules Laforgue, a French poet who had begun to influence him, and partly to sink into Europe. In Paris, he was briefly attracted to Henri Bergson, whose lectures on philosophy he attended at the Collège de France, but then he came upon Charles Maurras. Maurras's ideas—"*classique, catholique, monarchique*"—stuck to Eliot for life, and were transmuted in 1928 into Eliot's own "classicist in literature, royalist in politics, Anglo-Catholic in religion." In 1910, the word "Fascist" was not yet in fashion, but a Fascist is exactly what Maurras was. Later on, he joined the pro-Nazi Vichy regime, and he went to jail for it after the Second World War. None of this dented Eliot's enduring admiration: "Hommage à Charles Maurras" was written as late as 1948. When Eliot first encountered him, Maurras was a founder of an antidemocratic organization called Action Française, which specialized in student riots and open assaults on free-thinkers and Jews. Eliot, an onlooker on one of these occasions, did not shrink from the violence. (Ackroyd notes that he "liked boxing matches also.")

After Paris, he obediently returned to Harvard for three diligent years, doing some undergraduate teaching and working toward his doctoral degree. One of his courses was with Bertrand Russell, visiting from England. Russell saw Eliot at twenty-five as a silent young dandy, impeccably turned out, but a stick, without "vigour or life—or enthusiasm." (Only a year later, in England, the diffident dandy—by then a new husband—moved, with his bride, right into Russell's tiny flat.) During the remainder of the Harvard period, Eliot embarked on Sanskrit, read Hindu and Buddhist sacred texts, and tunnelled into the investigations that culminated in his dissertation, "Experience and the Objects of Knowledge in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley." Screened by this busy academic program, he was also writing poetry. When Harvard offered

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him a travelling fellowship, he set off for Europe again, and never came back to live in the country of his birth. It was the beginning of the impersonations that were to become transformations.

d.ehrenberg

He had intended an extensive tour of the Continent, but in August of 1914, when war broke out, he retreated to England and enrolled at Oxford, ostensibly to continue his studies in philosophy. Oxford seemed an obvious way station for a young man headed for a professorial career, and his parents, shuttling between St. Louis and a comfortable summer house in New England, and ineradicably American in their habits and point of view, could not have judged otherwise, or suspected a permanent transatlantic removal. But what Eliot was really after was London, the literary life of London, in the manner of Henry James's illustrious conquest of it three decades before. He was quiet, deceptively passive, always reserved, on the watch for opportunity. He met Ezra Pound almost immediately. Pound, a fellow-expatriate, was three years older and had come to London five years earlier. He had already published five volumes of poetry. He was idiosyncratic, noisy, cranky, aggressive, repetitively and tediously humorous, and perilously unpredictable, and he kept an eye out for ways to position himself at the center of whatever maelstrom was current or could be readily invented. By the time he and Eliot discovered each other, Pound had been through Imagism and was boosting Vorticism; he wanted to shepherd movements, organize souls, administer lives. He read a handful of Eliot's Harvard poems, including "Portrait of a Lady" and "Prufrock," and instantly anointed him as the real thing. To Harriet Monroe, in Chicago, the editor of *Poetry*, which was then the most distinguished American journal of its kind, he trumpeted Eliot as the author of "the best poem I have yet had or seen from an American," and insisted that she publish "Prufrock." He swept around London introducing his new protégé and finding outlets for his poems in periodicals with names like *Others* and *BLAST* (a Vorticist effort, printed on flamingo-pink paper and featuring eccentric typography).

Eliot felt encouraged enough by these successes to abandon both Oxford and Harvard, and took a job teaching in a boys' secondary school to support the poet he was now heartened to become. His mother, appalled by such recklessness, directed her shock not at Eliot but at his former teacher Bertrand Russell (much as she had gone to the headmaster behind the teen-age Eliot's back to protest the risks of the quarry pond). "I hope Tom will be able to carry out his purpose of coming on in May to take his degree," she wrote. "The Ph.D. is becoming in America . . . almost an essential for an Academic position and promotion therein. The male teachers in our secondary schools are as a rule inferior to the women teachers, and they have little social position or distinction. I hope Tom will not undertake such work another year—it is like putting Pegasus in harness." Eliot's father, storming behind the scenes, was less impressed by Pegasus. The appeal to Russell concluded, "As for '*The BLAST*,' Mr. Eliot remarked when he saw a copy he did not know there were enough lunatics in the world to support such a magazine."

Home, in short, was seething. Within an inch of his degree, the compliant son was suddenly growing prodigal. A bombardment of cables and letters followed. Even the war conspired against the prodigal's return: though Pound was already preparing to fill Eliot's luggage with masses of Vorticist material for a projected show in New York, the danger of German U-boats made a journey by sea unsafe. Russell cabled Eliot's father not to urge him to sit for his exams "UNLESS IMMEDIATE DEGREE IS WORTH RISKING LIFE." In a letter to Harvard, Eliot's father complained, "I was not greatly pleased with the language of Prof. Russell's cable-gram. Mrs. Eliot and I will use every effort to induce my son to take his examinations later. Doubtless his decision was much influenced by Prof. Russell." Clearly, the maternal plea to Russell had backfired. Meanwhile, Harvard itself, in the person of James H. Woods, Eliot's mentor in the Philosophy Department, was importuning him. Woods was tireless in offering an appointment. Eliot turned

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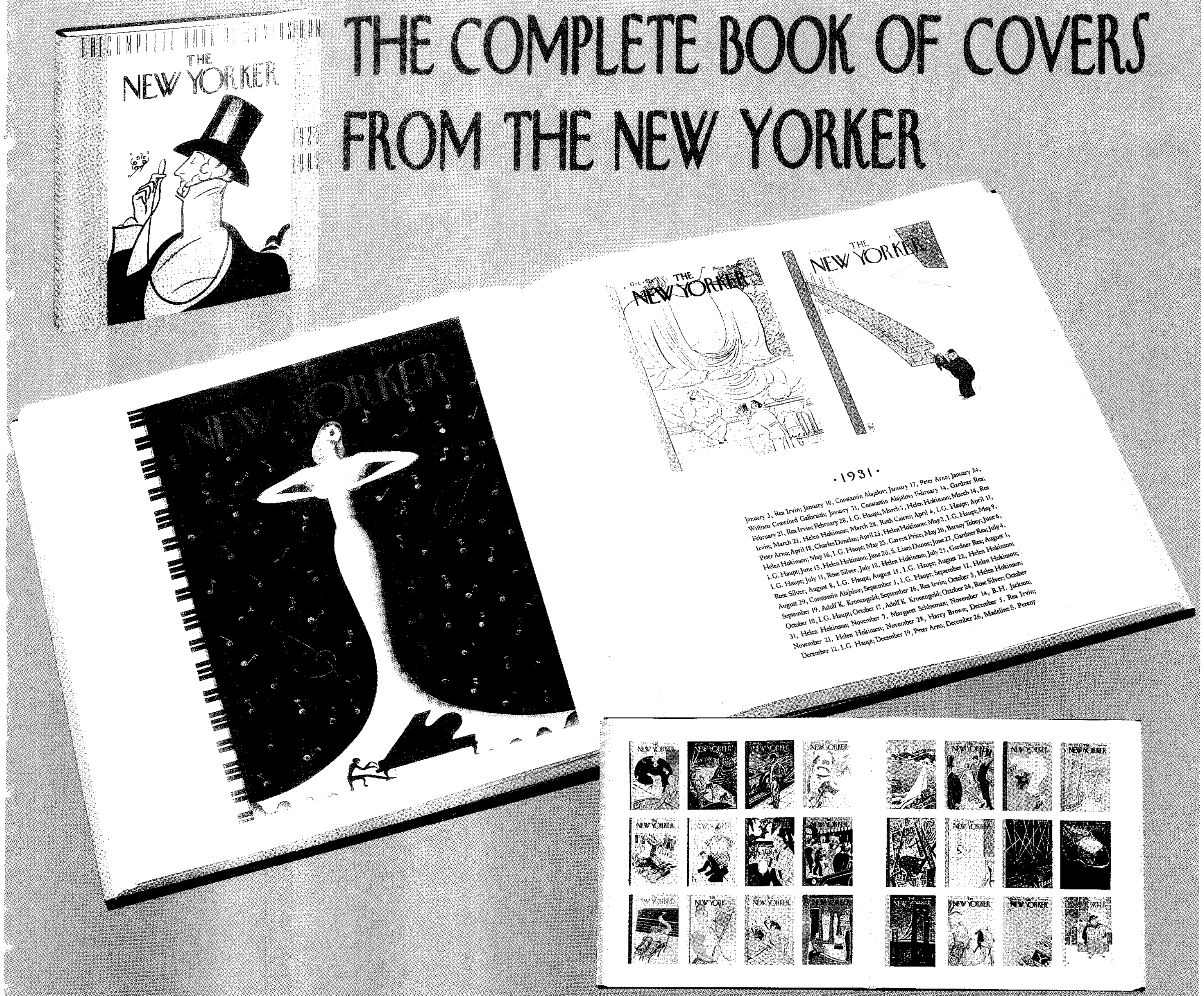

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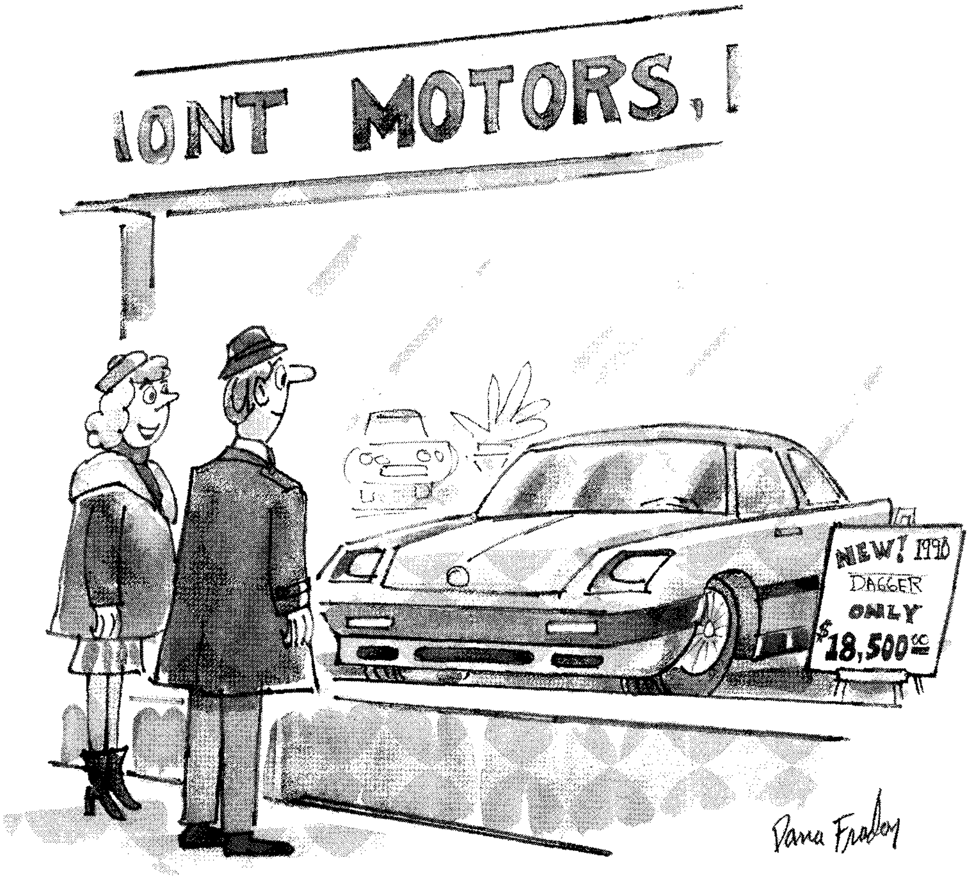
him down. Three years on, the family campaign to lure him home was unabated: the biggest gun of all was brought out—Charles W. Eliot, eminent educational reformer, recent president of Harvard, architect of the "five-foot shelf" of indispensable classics, and Eliot's grandfather's third cousin once removed. "I conceive that you have a real claim on my attention and interest," he assured his wayward young relative:

> It is, nevertheless, quite unintelligible to me how you or any other young American scholar can forego the privilege of living in the genuine American atmosphere—a bright atmosphere of freedom and hope. I have never lived long in England—about six months in all—but I have never got used to the manners and customs of any class in English society, high, middle, or low. After a stay of two weeks or two months in England it has been delightful for me to escape. . . .
>
> Then, too, I have never been able to understand how any American man of letters can forego the privilege of being of use primarily to Americans of the present and future generations, as Emerson, Bryant, Lowell, and Whittier were. Literature seems to me highly climatic and national. . . .
>
> You mention in your letter the name of Henry James. I knew his father well, and his brother William very well; and I had some conversation with Henry at different times during his life. I have a vivid remembrance of a talk with him during his last visit to America. It seemed to me all along that his English residence for so many years contributed neither to the happy development of his art nor to his personal happiness. . . .
>
> My last word is that if you wish to speak through your own work to people of the "finest New England spirit" you had better not live much longer in the English atmosphere. The New England spirit has been nurtured in the American atmosphere.

What Eliot thought—three years before the publication of "The Waste Land"—of this tribal lecture, and particularly of its recommendation that he aspire to the mantle of the author of "Thanatopsis," one may cheerfully imagine. In any case, it was too late, and had long been too late. The campaign was lost before the first parental shot. Eliot's tie to England was past revocation. While still at Oxford, he was introduced to Vivien Haigh-Wood, a high-spirited, high-strung, artistic young woman, the daughter of a cultivated upper-class family; her father painted landscapes and portraits. Eliot, shy and apparently not yet relieved of his virginity, was attracted to her rather theatrical personality. Bertrand Russell sensed in her something



"Couldn't we carry it off-budget?"

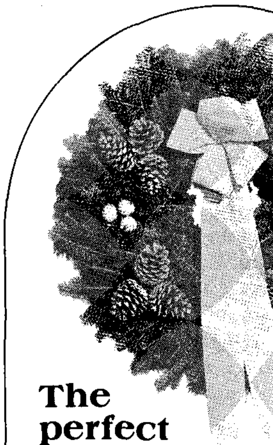
• •

brasher—perhaps rasher—than mere vivaciousness; he judged her light, faintly vulgar, and adventurous. Eliot married her only weeks after they met. The marriage, he knew, was the seal on his determination to stay in England, the seal that his parents could not break and against which they would be helpless. After the honeymoon, Russell (through pure chance, Eliot had bumped into him on a London street) took the new couple in for a few months, from September to Christmas of 1915—he had a closet-size spare room—and helped them out financially in other ways. He also launched Eliot as a reviewer, by putting him in touch with the literary editor of *The New Statesman*, for whom Eliot now began to write intensively.

Probably Russell's most useful service was arranging for Eliot to be welcomed into the intellectual and literary circle around Lady Ottoline Morrell at Garsington, her country estate. Though invitations went to leading artists and writers, Garsington was not simply a salon: the Morrells were principled pacifists, who during the war provided farm work for conscientious objectors. Here Eliot found Aldous Huxley, D. H. Lawrence, Lytton Strachey, Katherine Mansfield, the painter Mark Gertler, Clive Bell, and, eventually, Leonard and Virginia Woolf. Lady Ottoline complained at first that Eliot had no spontaneity, that he barely moved his lips when he spoke, and that his voice was "mandarin." But Russell had carried him—in his arms, as it were—into the inmost eye of the most sophisticated whorl of contemporary English letters. The American newcomer who had left Harvard on a student fellowship in 1914 was by the middle of 1915 at the core of the London literary milieu he had dreamed of. And, with so many models around him, he was working on disposing of whatever remnants of St. Louis remained lodged in his mouth, and perfecting the accent and the manner of a highborn Englishman. (If he was grateful to Russell for this happy early initiation into precisely the society he coveted, by 1931—in "Thoughts After Lambeth," an essay on the idea of a national English church—he was sneering, in italics, at Russell's "*gospel of happiness*.")

Meanwhile, his parents required placating. A bright young man in his twenties had gone abroad to augment his studies. It would have been natural for him to come home within a reasonable time to get started on real life and his profession. Instead, he had made a precipitate marriage, intended to spend the rest of his days in a foreign country, and was teaching French and arithmetic in a secondary school. Not surprisingly, the brick manufacturer and his piously versifying wife were unable to infer the sublime vocation of a poet from these evidences. Eliot hoped to persuade them. The marriage to Vivien took place on June 26, 1915. On June 28th, Ezra Pound wrote a very long letter to Eliot's father. It was one of Eliot's mother's own devices—that of the surrogate pleader. As his mother had asked Russell to intervene with Eliot to return him to Harvard, so Eliot was now enlisting Pound to argue for London. The letter included much information about Pound's own situation, which could not have been reassuring, since—as Pound himself remarked—it was unlikely that the elder Eliot had ever heard of him. But he sweetened the case with respectable references to Edgar Lee Masters and Robert Browning, and was careful to add that Robert Frost, another American in England, had "done a book of New England eclogues." To the heartbroken father who had looked forward to a distinguished university career for his son, Pound said, "I am now much better off than if I had kept on my professorship in Indiana"—empty comfort, considering it was Fair Harvard that was being mourned. What Pound had relinquished was Wabash College, in a place called Crawfordsville. What could it have meant to Eliot's father that this twenty-nine-year-old contributor to the lunatic *BLAST* boasted of having "engineered a new school of verse now known in England, France and America," and insisted that "when I make a criticism of your son's work it is not an amateur criticism"? And Pound contended:

> As to his coming to London, anything else is a waste of time and energy. No one in London cares a hang what is written in America. After getting an American audience a man has to begin all over again here if he plans for an international hearing. . . . The situation has been very well summed up in the sentence: "Henry James stayed in Paris and read Turgenev and



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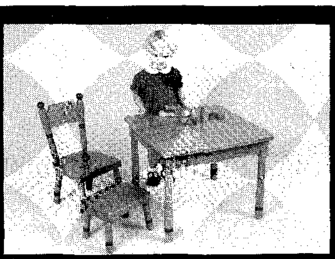

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Flaubert, Mr. Howells returned to America and read Henry James.". . . At any rate if T.S.E. is set on a literary career, this is the place to begin it and any other start would be very bad economy. . . . I might add that a literary man's income depends very much on how rigidly he insists on doing exactly what he himself wants to do. It depends on his connection, which he makes himself. It depends on the number of feuds that he takes on for the sake of his aesthetic beliefs. T.S.E. does not seem to be so pugnacious as I am and his course should be the smoother and swifter.

The prediction held. The two-year eruption that was Vorticism waned, and so did Pound's local star; he moved on to Paris—leaving London, as it turned out, in Eliot's possession. Pound's letter to the elder Eliot was not all bluster: he may have been a deft self-promoter, but he was also a promoter of literary ideas, and in Eliot's work he saw those ideas made flesh. The exuberance that sent Pound bustling through London to place Eliot here and there was the enthusiasm of an inventor whose thingamajig is just beginning to work in the world at large—the breakthrough spirit of Alexander Graham Bell's "Mr. Watson, come here." In Pound's mind, Eliot was Pound's invention. Certainly the excisions he demanded in "The Waste Land" radically "modernized" it in the direction of the objective correlative by keeping in the symbols and chopping out context and narrative, maneuvering the poem toward greater obliqueness and opacity. He also maneuvered Eliot. A determined literary man must go after his own "connection," he had advised Eliot's father, but the boisterous Pound served the reticent Eliot in a network of useful connections that Eliot would not have been likely to make on his own, including John Quinn, a New York literary philanthropist, who became Eliot's (unpaid) agent in America and shored him up from time to time with generous money contributions.

Eliot was dependent on Pound's approval, or for a long while behaved as if he were. It was Pound who dominated the friendship, periodically shooting out instructions, information, scalawag counsel and pontification. "I value his verse far higher than that of any other living poet," Eliot told John Quinn in 1918. Gradually, over a span of years, there was a reversal of authority and power. Eliot rose and Pound sank. Under the pressure imposed by marriage (Vivien held no job of any

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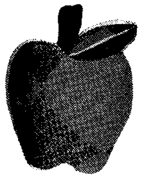

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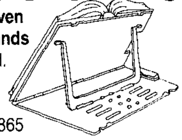
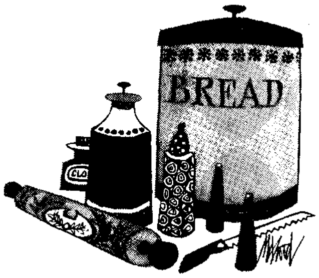


kind, nor could she have, even if it had been expected of her), Eliot ascended in the pragmatic world as well. He gave up teaching secondary school—it required him to supervise sports—and tried evening adult extension-course lecturing. The preparation was all-consuming and the remuneration paltry. Finally, he recognized—he was, after all, his father's son—that this was no way to earn a living. A friend of Vivien's family recommended him to Lloyds Bank, where he turned out to be very good at the work—he had a position in the foreign department—and was regularly praised and advanced. Eventually, he joined Faber & Gwyer, the London publishing house (later Faber & Faber), and remained associated with it until the end of his life. And then it was Pound who had to come to Eliot with his manuscripts. Eliot published them, but his responses, which had once met Pound's antics with answering foolery, became heavily businesslike and impatient. As the founder and editor of a literary journal that Vivien had named *The Criterion*, Eliot went on commissioning pieces from Pound, though he frequently attempted to impose coherence and discipline; occasionally, he rejected something outright. In 1922, Pound had asserted that "Eliot's *Waste Land* is I think the justification of the 'movement,' of our modern experiment, since 1900," but by 1930 he was taunting Eliot for having "arrived at the supreme Eminence among English critics largely through disguising himself as a corpse." Yet if admiration had cooled on both sides Eliot's loyalty remained fundamentally steadfast, even when he understood that Pound might be approaching lunacy. After the Second World War, when Pound was a patient in St. Elizabeths Federal Hospital for the Insane, in Washington—the United States government's alternative to jailing him for treason—Eliot worked quietly for his release and made sure to see him on visits to America. Eliot never publicly commented on the reason for Pound's incarceration: Pound had supported the Axis and had actively aided the enemy. On Italian radio, in Mussolini's employ, he had broadcast twice-weekly attacks on Roosevelt, Churchill, and the Jews (whom he vilified in the style of Goebbels).



Though in the long run the friendship altered and attenuated—especially as Eliot grew more seriously implicated in his Christian commitment and Pound in his self-proclaimed paganism—Eliot learned much from Pound. He had already learned from Laforgue the technique of the ironically illuminated persona. The tone of youthful ennui and the ageless, though precocious, recoil from the world of phenomena were Eliot's own. To these qualities of negation Pound added others: indirection, fragmentation, suggestibility, the force of piebald and zigzag juxtaposition—what we have long recognized as the signs of modernism, that famous alchemy of less becoming more. But even as Pound was tearing down the conventional frame of art, he was instructing Eliot in how to frame a career—not that Eliot really needed Pound in either sphere. Poets and critics may fabricate "movements," but no one can invent the Zeitgeist, and it was the Zeitgeist that was promulgating modernism. Eliot may well have been headed there with or without Pound at the helm. That Pound considered Eliot a creature of his own manufacture—and that he did in fact tinker with the design—hardly signifies, given that Eliot's art was anyhow likely to land among the rumbling imperatives of its own time. As for Eliot's advancement into greater and greater reputation, even pushy Pound could not push a miracle into being. Still, it was evident early on that Pound's dictates were in full operation. In 1915, Eliot informs his brother, Henry:

> Now I am going to ask you to do something for me in case you are in Boston or New York this summer. These are suggestions of Ezra Pound's, who has a very shrewd head, and has taken a very great interest in my prospects. There will be people to be seen in Boston and New York, editors with whom I might have some chance. . . . As you are likeliest to be in Boston, the first thing is the *Atlantic Monthly*. Now Pound considers it important, whenever possible, to secure introductions to editors from people of better social position than themselves.

He goes on to propose that Isabella Stewart Gardner, an influential connection, be dragooned into sending a

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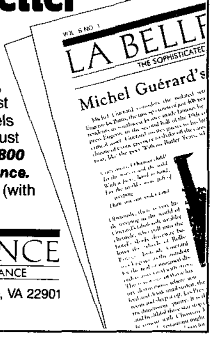

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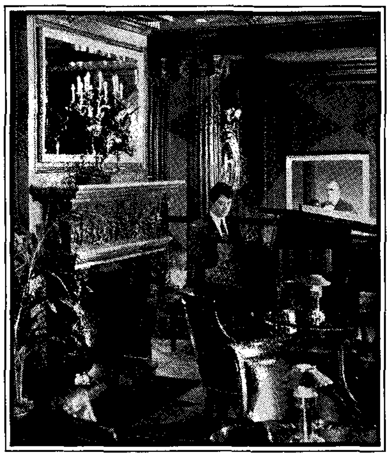

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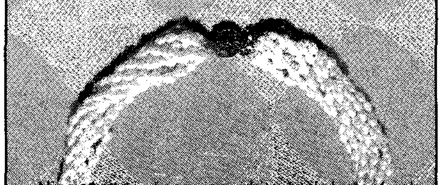

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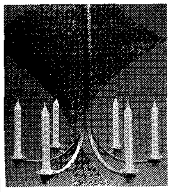

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note to the editor of *The Atlantic* on his behalf. A few days later, he is writing to Mrs. Gardner himself, announcing the imminent arrival of his brother, "in order that he may get your advice." To Henry he admits he has only a handful of poems to show, including "some rather second rate things," but anyhow he asks him to try for an opening at *Harper's*, *The Century*, *The Bookman*, and *The New Republic*. "Nothing needs to be done in Chicago, I believe," he adds.

Thus Pound's training in chutzpah. Yet much of it was native to Eliot, picked up at the parental knee. Not for nothing was he the offspring of a mother who was a model of the epistolary maneuver, and of a father who demanded instant success. He had been reared, in any event, as one of the lords of creation in a conscious American aristocracy that believed in its superior birthright—a Midwestern enclave of what Cousin Charles Eliot had called "the finest New England spirit." In the alien precincts of London, where his credentials were unknown or immaterial, the top could not be so easily guaranteed; it would have to be cajoled, manipulated, seduced, dared, commanded, now and then dodged; it would have to be pressed hard, and cunningly.

All this Eliot saw for himself, and rapidly. Reserve shored up cunning. Pound was scarcely required to teach him how to calculate the main chance, or how to scheme to impose his importance. He was actually better at it than Pound, because infinitely silkier. Whereas Pound had one voice to assault the barricades with—a cantankerous blast in nutty frontiersman spelling ("You jess set and hev a quiet draw at youh cawn-kob"), which was likely to annoy and was intended to shake you up—Eliot had dozens of voices. His early letters—where he is sedulously on the make—are a ventriloquist's handbook. To Mrs. Gardner he purrs, as one should to a prominent patroness of the arts—with friendly dignity, in a courteously appreciative tone, avoiding the appearance of pursuit. Addressing the irascibly playful Pound, he is irascibly playful, and falls into identical orthographical jokiness. To his benefactor John Quinn he is punctiliously—though never humbly—grateful, recording the state of his literary barometer with a precision owed to the chairman of the board; nor

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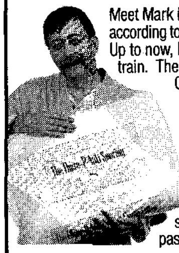

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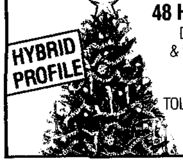

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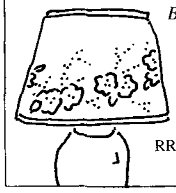

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does he ever fail to ask after Quinn's health. To his father he writes about money, to his mother about underwear and overcoats. Before both of them, anxiety and dutifulness prevail; he is eager to justify himself and to tot up his triumphs. He means to show them how right he was in choosing a London life; he is not a disappointment after all. "I am staying in the bank," he reports. (He had been offered an editorship on a literary journal.) This in itself will please his father, but there is much more:

> As it is, I occupy rather a privileged position. I am out of the intrigues and personal hatreds of journalism, and every-one respects me for working in a bank. My social position is quite as good as it would be as editor of a paper. I only write what I want to—*now*—and everyone knows that anything I do write is good. I can influence London opinion and English literature in a better way. I am known to be disinterested. Even through the *Egoist* I am getting to be looked up to by people who are far better known to the general public than I. There is a small and select public which regards me as the best living critic, as well as the best living poet, in England. I shall of course write for the *Ath.* [*The Athenaeum*] and keep my finger in it. I am much in sympathy with the editor, who is one of my most cordial admirers. With that and the *Egoist* and a young quarterly review which I am interested in, and which is glad to take anything I will give, I can have more than enough power to satisfy me. I really think that I have far more *influence* on English letters than any other American has ever had, unless it be Henry James. I know a great many people, but there are many more who would like to know me, and I can remain isolated and detached.
>
> All this sounds very conceited, but I am sure it is true, and as there is no outsider from whom you would hear it, and America really knows very little of what goes on in London, I must say it myself. Because it will give you pleasure if you believe it, and it will help to explain my point of view.

This was surely the voice of a small boy making his case to his skeptical parents: *It will give you pleasure if you believe it*. He was thirty years old. The self-assurance—or call it, as others did, the arrogance—was genuine, and before his father and mother he was unashamed of speaking of the necessity of power. Such an aspiration was axiomatic among Eliots. What he had set himself to attain was the absolute pinnacle—a place inhabited by no one else, where he could "remain isolated and detached." Fate would give him his wish exactly and with a vengeance, though not quite yet. If he was puffing London to St. Louis, and representing himself there as "the best living critic, as well as the best living poet, in England," two months later he was telling Lytton Strachey that he regarded "London with disdain," and divided "mankind into supermen, termites, and wireworms," and that he was "sojourning among the termites."

In all this there is a wonder and an enigma: the prodigy of Eliot's rocket-like climb from termite to superman. London (and New York and Boston) was swarming with young men on a course no different from Eliot's. He was not the only one with a hotly ambitious pen and an appetite for cultivating highly placed people who might be useful to him. John Middleton Murry and Wyndham Lewis, for example, both of whom were in Eliot's immediate circle, were equally striving and equally polished, and though we still know their names, we know them more as footnotes than as the main text. All three were engaged in the same sort of essayistic empire-building in the little magazines, and at the same time. Lewis published Eliot in *BLAST*,

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Murry published him in *The Athenaeum*, and later Eliot, when he was editing *The Criterion*, published Lewis. Yet Eliot very quickly overshadowed the others. The disparity, it can be argued, was that Eliot was primarily a poet, or that Eliot's talent was more robust. But even if we believe, as most of us do, that genius of its own force will sooner or later leap commandingly out (Melville's and Dickinson's redemption from obscurity being our sacred paradigms), the riddle stands: Why, for Eliot, so soon? His termite days were a brevity, a breath; he was superman in an instant. What was it that singled Eliot out to put him in the lead so astoundingly early? That he ferociously *willed* it means nothing. Nearly all beginning writers have a will for extreme fame; will, no matter how resilient, is usually no more efficacious in the marketplace than daydream.

If there is any answer to such questions—and there may not be—it may lie hidden in one of Eliot's well-appointed impersonations: the voice he employed as essayist. That charm of intimacy and the easy giving of secrets which we like to associate with essayists—Montaigne, Lamb, Hazlitt, George Orwell, and Virginia Woolf when the mood struck her—was not Eliot's. As in what is called the "familiar" essay, Eliot frequently said "I," but it was an "I" set in ice cut from the celestial vault: uninsistent yet incontestable, serenely sovereign. It seemed to take its power from erudition, and, in part, it did. But really this power derived from some proud inner figuration or incarnation—as if Literature itself had been summoned to speak in its own voice:

> I am not considering whether the language of Dante or Shakespeare is superior, for I cannot admit the question: I merely affirm that the differences are such as make Dante easier for a foreigner. Dante's advantages are not due to greater genius, but to the fact that he wrote when Europe was still more or less one. And even had Chaucer or Villon been exact contemporaries of Dante, they would still have been farther, linguistically as well as geographically, from the centre of Europe than Dante.

Who could talk back to that? Such sentences appear to derive from a source of knowledge—a congeries of assumptions—indistinguishable from majesty. In short, Eliot would not *permit* himself to be ignored, because it was not "himself" he was representing but the very flower of European civilization. And there may have been another element contributing to the ready acceptance of his authority: as a foreigner, he was drawn to synthesizing and summarizing in a way that insiders, who take their context for granted, never do. He saw principles where the natives saw only phenomena. Besides, he had a clear model for focussed ascent: Henry James. Knowing what he meant to become, he was immune to distraction or wrong turnings. "It is the final perfection, the consummation of an American," Eliot (in one of his most autobiographical dicta) wrote of James, "to become, not an Englishman, but a European—something which no born European, no person of any European nationality, can become."

SO much for the larger trajectory. Eliot had mapped out an unimpeded ideal destination. In the lesser geography of private life, however, there was an unforeseen impediment. Henry James had never married; Eliot had married Vivien. In 1915, she was twenty-seven, slender, lively, very pretty, with a wave in her hair and a pleasant mouth and chin; by 1919, Virginia Woolf was describing her as "a washed out, elderly & worn looking little woman." She complained of illness from the very first, but otherwise there were few immediate hints of the devastation to come. She was absorbed in Eliot's career. He brought his newest work to her for criticism; she read proofs; she assisted in preparing *The Criterion*. She also did some writing of her own—short stories, and prose sketches that Eliot admired and published in *The Criterion*. She had energy enough at the start: there were excursions, dinners, visits to Garsington; dance halls, dance lessons, theatre, opera; even a flirtation with Bertrand Russell that turned into a one-night stand. ("Hellish and loathsome," Russell called it.) A month after the wedding, she told Russell that she had married Eliot because she thought she could "stimulate" him, but that it could not be done. She began to suffer from headaches, colitis, neuralgia, insomnia. "She is a person who lives on a knife edge," Russell said. Eliot himself often woke at night feeling sick. He was plagued by colds, flu, bronchial problems; he smoked too much, and he consistently drank too much, though he held it well.

Retreating from Vivien, he threw himself into the work at the bank and into developing his literary reputation. Vivien had nowhere to go but into resentment, ill will, hysteria. In the mornings, the bed linens were frequently bloody: she menstruated excessively, and became obsessed with washing the sheets; she washed them herself even when they stayed in hotels. Morphine was prescribed for her various symptoms; also bromides and ether (she swabbed her whole body with ether, so that she reeked of it), and mercilessly bizarre diets—a German doctor combined starvation with the injection of animal glands. She collapsed into one nervous illness after another. Eliot repeatedly sent her to the country to recuperate, while he remained in town. When his mother, now an elderly widow, and one of his sisters came on a visit from America, Vivien was absent, and Eliot was obliged to manage the complications of hospitality on his own. Anxiety over Vivien crept into all his business and social correspondence. "My wife has been very ill." "She is all right when she

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is lying down, but immediately she gets up is very faint." "Wretched today—another bad night." "Have you ever been in such incessant and extreme pain that you felt your sanity going, and that you no longer knew reality from delusion? That's the way she is. The doctors have never seen so bad a case, and hold out no definite hope, and have so far done her no good. Meanwhile she is in screaming agony."

She brought out in him all his responsibility, vigilance, conscientiousness, troubled concern—in brief, his virtue. Her condition bewildered him. Nothing in his experience, and certainly nothing in his upbringing, had equipped him for it. Her manifold sicknesses were unpredictable, and so was she. Her sanity was, in fact, going. Daily, she made him consider and reconsider his conduct toward her, and her ironic, clever, assaultive, always embarrassing responses aggravated his hostility and resentment. He dreaded dinner parties in her company, and went alone or not at all. It became known that Eliot was ashamed of his wife. But he was also ashamed of his life. Little by little, he attempted to live it without Vivien, or despite Vivien, or in the few loopholes left him by Vivien. She was in and out of sanitariums in England, France, and Switzerland; it was a relief to have her away. What had once been frightened solicitude was gradually transmuted into horror, and horror into self-preservation, and self-preservation into callousness, and callousness into a kind of moral brutality. She felt how, emotionally and spiritually, he was abandoning her to her ordeal. However imploringly she sought his attention, he was determined to shut her out; the more he shut her out, the more wildly, dramatically, and desperately she tried to recapture him. He was now a man hunted—and haunted—by a mad wife. He saw himself transmogrified into one of the hollow men of his own imagining, that scarecrow figure stuck together out of "rat's coat, crowskin, crossed staves":

The eyes are not here
There are no eyes here
In this valley of dying stars
In this hollow valley
This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms.

He carried this Golgothan self-portrait with him everywhere; his lost kingdoms were in the stony looks he gave to the world. Virginia Woolf was

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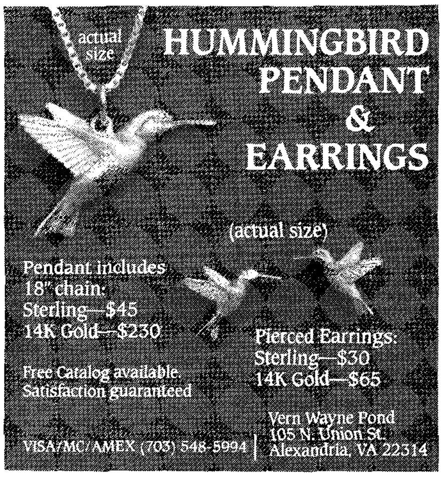

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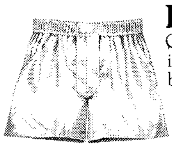

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struck by "the grim marble face . . . mouth twisted & shut; not a single line free & easy; all caught, pressed, inhibited." "Humiliation is the worst thing in life," he told her. Vivien had humiliated him. Torment and victimization—she of him and he of her—had degraded him. Bouts of drink depleted him. At times, his behavior was as strange as hers: he took to wearing pale-green face powder, as if impersonating the sickly cast of death. Virginia Woolf thought he painted his lips. In 1932, after seventeen years of accelerating domestic misery, he finally broke loose: he went to America for a series of angry lectures (published later as "After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy"), in which he attacked Pound, D. H. Lawrence, liberalism, and "free-thinking Jews," complaining that the United States had been "invaded by foreign races" who had "adulterated" its population. In London, meanwhile, a remorseful Vivien was refurbishing the flat for his homecoming; she even offered to join him overseas. Her letter shocked him, in the black mood of his lectures, into a quick and cruel plan. Writing from America, he directed his London solicitors to prepare a Deed of Separation. When Eliot arrived back in England, he did not return to Vivien. In disbelief, she continued to wait for him, in the reupholstered flat, but he moved into the shabby guest rooms of the parish house of St. Stephen's, an Anglican congregation with a High Church bent. There, subdued and alone among celibate priests, he spent the next half-dozen years in penance, suffering the very isolation and detachment he had once prized as the influential poet's reward.

Yet Vivien was in pursuit. Though he kept his lodgings secret from her, with fearful single-mindedness she attempted to hunt him down, turning up wherever there might be a chance of confronting him, in the hope of cajoling or threatening him into resuming life with her. He contrived to escape her time after time. By now, he had left the bank for Faber; she would burst without warning into the editorial offices, weeping, and pleading to be allowed to talk to him. One of the staff would give some excuse, and Eliot would find a way of sneaking out of the building without detection. She carried a knife in her purse—that was part of her customary flamboyance—to alarm him; but it was a theatre knife, made of rubber. She sent Christmas cards in the name of "Mr. and Mrs. T. S. Eliot," as if they were still together, and she advertised in the *Times* for him to return. She called herself sometimes Tiresias, and sometimes Daisy Miller, after the doomed Jamesian heroine. In a caricature of what she imagined would please him, she joined the newly formed British Union of Fascists. One day, she actually caught him: she went up to him after a lecture, handed him books to sign as if they were strangers, and begged him to go home with her. He hid his recoil behind a polite "How do you do?" When she got wind of a scheme to commit her to a mental hospital, she fled briefly to Paris. In 1938, she was permanently institutionalized, whether by her mother or her brother or by Eliot himself no one knows, but Eliot had to have been consulted, at the very least. When her brother visited her in 1946, a year before her death, he reported that she seemed as sane as he was. She had tried on one occasion to run away, and had been captured and brought back. She died in the asylum almost a decade after her commitment. Eliot never once went to see her.

Out of this brutalizing history of grieving and loss, of misalliance, misfortune, frantic confusion, and recurrent panic, Eliot drew the formulation of his dream of horror—that waste land where

. . . I Tiresias have foresuffered all . . .
And walked among the lowest of the
  dead. . . .

Here is no water but only rock . . .
If there were only water amongst the rock
Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth
  that cannot spit

. . . blood shaking my heart
The awful daring of a moment's surrender
Which an age of prudence can never
  retract
By this, and this only, we have existed
Which is not to be found in our obituaries
Or in memories draped by the beneficent
  spider
Or under seals broken by the lean
  solicitor
In our empty rooms

He might have regarded his marriage and its trials as a regrettable accident of fallible youth—the awful daring of a moment's surrender—compounded by his initial sense of duty and loyalty. But he was shattered to a point beyond realism, and, finally, beyond stoicism. He felt he had gazed too long

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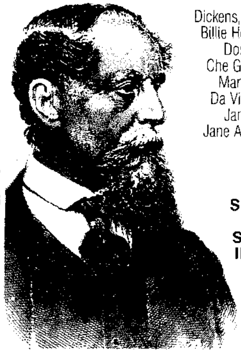
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on the Furies. The fiery brand he had plucked out of his private inferno seemed not to have been ignited in the ordinary world; it blackened him metaphysically, and had little to do with fractured expectations or the social difficulties of mental illness. He knew himself to be a sinner. The wretchedness he had endured was the fruit of sin. Vivien had been abused—by doctors and their scattershot treatments, and by regimens Eliot could not have prevented. The truth was she had been drugged for years. And he had abused her himself, perhaps more horribly, by the withdrawal of simple human sympathy. It was she who had smothered his emotional faculties, but reciprocal humiliation had not earned reciprocal destinies. Vivien was confined. He was freed to increase his fame. Nevertheless—as if to compensate her—he lived like a man imprisoned; like a penitent; like a flagellant. He was consumed by ideas of sin and salvation, by self-loathing. The scourge that was Vivien had driven him to conversion: he entered Christianity seriously and desperately, like a soul literally in danger of damnation, or as though he believed he was already half damned. The religiosity he undertook was a kind of brooding medieval monkishness: ascetic, turned altogether inward, to the sinful self. Its work was the work of personal redemption. In "Ash Wednesday" he exposed the starting point, the beginning of abnegation and confession:

> Because these wings are no longer wings
> to fly
> But merely vans to beat the air
> The air which is now thoroughly small
> and dry
> Smaller and dryer than the will
> Teach us to care and not to care
> Teach us to sit still.

And in a way he did learn to sit still. He was celibate. He was diligent and attentive in his office life while conducting an orderly, if lonely, domestic routine. He was at Mass every morning, and frequently went on retreat. In 1940, he served for a time as an air-raid warden, often staying up till dawn. Then, during the nightly blitz of London, to escape the exhausting bombings, he turned, like so many others, to commuting from the far suburbs, where he had become the paying guest of a family of gentlewomen. In 1946, just after the war, he made another unusual household arrangement—one that also had its spiritual side. He moved in with John Hayward, a

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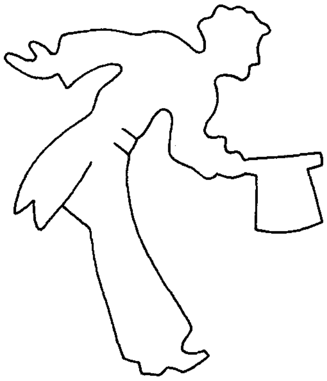
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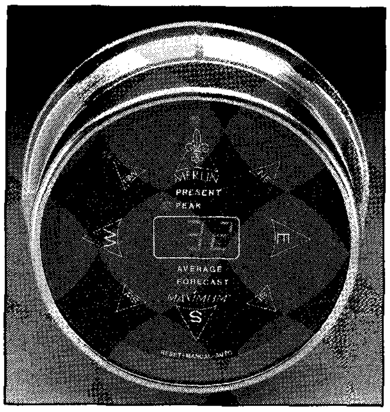

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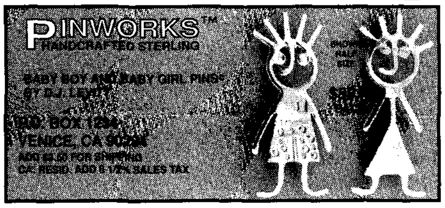

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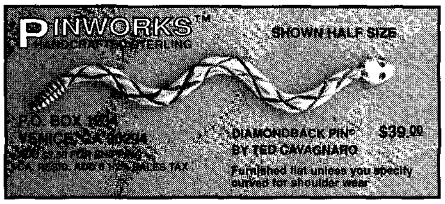

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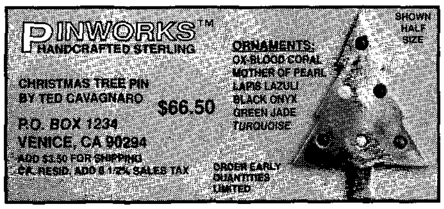

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gregarious wit and bookish extrovert whom disease had locked in a wheelchair. Eliot performed the necessary small personal tasks for his companion, wheeled him to the park on pleasant afternoons, and stood vigilantly behind his chair at the parties Hayward liked to preside over—Eliot reserved and silent under the burden of his secret wounds and his eminence, Hayward boisterous, funny, and monarchically at ease. In the evenings, behind the shut door of the darkest room, at the back of the flat, Eliot recited the Rosary, ate his supper from a tray, and limited himself to a single game of patience. This odd couple lived together for eleven years, until Eliot suddenly married his young secretary, Valerie Fletcher. She offered him the intelligent adoration of an infatuated reader who had been enchanted by his poetry and his fame since her teens; she had come to Faber & Faber with no other motive than to be near him. Vivien died in 1947; the marriage to Valerie took place in 1957. After the long discipline of penance, he opened himself to capacious love for the first time. As he had known himself for a sinner, so now he knew himself for a happy man.

But the old reflex of recoil—and abandonment—appeared to have survived after all. From youth he had combined ingrained loyalty with the contrary habit of casting off the people who seemed likely to impede his freedom. He had fled over an ocean to separate himself from his demanding parents; yet it was his lot ultimately to mimic them. He was absorbed by religion, like his mother, and ended by writing, as she did, devotional poetry. Like his father, he was now a well-established businessman, indispensable to his firm and its most influential officer. (It developed that he copied his father even in trivia. The elder Eliot was given to playful doodlings of cats. The son—whose knack for cartooning exceeded the father's—wrote clever cat verses. These, in the form of the long-running Broadway musical, are nearly the whole sum of Eliot's current American renown: if today's undergraduates take spontaneous note of Eliot at all, "Cats" will be wailing out of their tape cassettes, not "The Waste Land.") Still, despite these evolving reversions, it was the lasting force of his repudiations that stung: his scorn for the family heritage of New England Unitarianism; his acquisition, in 1927, of British citizenship. He had thrown off both the liberal faith of his fathers—he termed it a heresy—and their native patriotic pride. He had shown early that he could sever what no longer suited. The selfless interval with John Hayward was cut off overnight: there is a story that Eliot called a taxi, told Hayward he was going off to be married, and walked out. After so prolonged a friendship—and dependence—Hayward felt cruelly abandoned. He never recovered his spirit. Eliot was repeatedly capable of such calculated abruptness. His abandonment of Vivien—the acknowledged sin of his soul, the flaming pit of his exile and suffering—was echoed in less theological tones in his careless dismissal of Emily Hale and Mary Trevelyan, the wounded women whose loving attachment he had welcomed for years. When Vivien died, each one—Emily Hale in America and Mary Trevelyan close at hand in London—believed that Eliot would now marry her.

Miss Hale—as she was to her students—was a gifted teacher of drama at various women's colleges and private schools for girls, with a modest but vivid acting talent of her own. She was a connection of the New England cousins; Eliot had known her since her girlhood. Their correspondence, with its webwork of common associations and sensibilities, flourished decade after decade. Eliot's trips to America frequently included long, renewing visits with her, and she, in turn, travelled to England over a series of summer vacations to be with him. (One of their excursions was to the lavish silent gardens of Burnt Norton, the unoccupied country mansion of an earl. That single afternoon of sunlight and roses was transformed by "a grace of sense, a white light still and moving," into the transcendent incantations of "Burnt Norton," the first of the "Quartets.") In America, she waited, in tranquil patience and steady exultation, for the marriage that was never to come; generations of her students were informed of her friendship with the greatest of living poets. Eliot found in her, at a distance, unbodied love, half-elusive nostalgia, the fragility of an ideal. When she threatened, at Vivien's death, to become a real-life encumbrance, he diluted their intimacy, and when he married Valerie Fletcher he sloughed Emily off altogether—rapidly and brutally. Stunned and demoralized—they had been friends for fifty years—she gave up teaching and spiralled into a breakdown. She spent the rest of her life in the hope that her importance to Eliot would not go unrecognized. Her enormous collection of his letters (more than a thousand) she donated to Princeton University, and—Eliot-haunted and Eliot-haunting—she asked him to return hers. He did not reply; he had apparently destroyed them. The "man I loved," she wrote to Princeton, "*I* think, did not respond as he should have to my long trust, friendship and love." She stipulated that the Princeton repository not be opened until 2019; she looked to her vindication then. Having been patient so long, she was willing to be patient beyond the grave. Eliot may have bestowed his infirm old age on Miss Fletcher, but the future would see that he had loved Miss Hale in his prime.

As for Mary Trevelyan, she was a hearty pragmatist, a spunky activist, a bold managerial spirit. For nineteen years, she was a prop against Eliot's depressions, a useful neighbor (she drove him all over in her car), and, to a degree, a confidante. From the beginning of Vivien's incarceration until his marriage to Valerie—from 1938 until 1957—Eliot and Mary were regularly together at plays, at parties, and, especially, at church. Their more private friendship centered on lunches and teas, domestic evenings cooking and listening to music in Mary's flat, her matter-of-fact solicitude through his illnesses and hypochondria. They made a point of mentioning each other in their separate devotions. Mary was at home in the pieties Eliot had taken on—she came of distinguished High Anglican stock, the élite of government, letters, and the cloth, with a strong commitment to public service. Her father was a clergyman who erected and administered churches; the historian G. M. Trevelyan was a cousin; her relatives permeated Oxford and Cambridge. (Humphrey Carpenter, the author of a remarkably fine biography of Ezra Pound—fittingly, published in Eliot's centenary year—represents the newest generation of this family.)

With Mary, Eliot could unbutton. He felt familiar enough to indulge in outbursts of rage or contemptuous sarcasm in her presence, and to display the most withering side of his character, lashing out at the people he despised. Through it all, she remained candid, humorous, and tolerant, though puzzled by his unpredictable fits of withdrawal from her, sometimes for three months at a time. He drew lines of conduct she was never permitted to cross; for instance, only once did he agree to their vacationing together, and that was when he needed her (and the convenience of her driving) to help entertain one of his sisters, visiting from America. Mary was accommodating but never submissive. In the last year of the war, she organized a rest hostel in Brussels for soldiers on leave from the front; in 1944, she nursed hundreds of the severely wounded. After the war, she travelled all over Asia for UNESCO, and founded an international house in London for foreign students. Plainly, she had nothing in common with the wistful and forbearing Miss Hale, of Abbot Academy for girls. But her expectations were the same. When Vivien died, Mary proposed marriage to Eliot—twice. When he refused her the first time, he said he was incapable of marrying anyone at all; she thought this meant his guilt over Vivien. The second time, he told her about his long attachment to Emily Hale, and how he was a failure at love; she thought this meant psychological exhaustion. And then he married Valerie. Only eight days before the wedding—held secretly in the early morning at a church Eliot did not normally attend—he and Mary lunched together for hours; he disclosed nothing. On the day of the wedding, she had a letter from him commemorating their friendship and declaring his love for Valerie. Mary sent back two notes, the earlier one to congratulate him, the second a report of her unrestrained initial shock. Eliot responded bitterly, putting an end to two decades of companionship.

BUT all this—the years of self-denial in the parish house, the wartime domesticity among decorous suburban ladies, the neighborly fellowship with John Hayward and Mary Trevelyan, the break with Hayward, the break with Hale, the break with Trevelyan, the joyous dénouement with Valerie Fletcher: all this, however deeply consecrated to quietism, however turbulent, was aftermath and postlude. The seizure that animated the poetry had already happened: the seizure was Vivien. Through Vivien he had learned to recognize the reality of sin in all its influences and phases; she was the turning wind of his spiritual storm. Vivien herself understood this with the canniness of a seer. "As to Tom's *mind*," she once said, "I am his mind." The abyss of that mind, and its effect on Eliot as it disintegrated, led him first through a vortex of flight and then to tormented contemplation and, finally, to the religious calm of "Burnt Norton":

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future,
> And time future contained in time past.

Time past marked the psychological anarchy of his youthful work, that vacuous ignorance of sin which had produced "Prufrock," "Gerontion," "The Hollow Men," "The Waste Land." Not to acknowledge the real presence of sin is to be helpless in one's degradation. Consequently, Prufrock is a wraith "pinned and wriggling on the wall," uncertain how to "spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways"; Gerontion is "a dry brain in a dry season"; the hollow men "filled with straw" cannot falter through to the end of a prayer ("For Thine is / Life is / For Thine is the"); the voice of "The Waste Land" ("burning burning burning burning") is unable to imagine prayer. And the chastening "future contained in time past" is almost surely the inferno that was Vivien: what could that earlier hollowness have arrived at if not a retributive burning? The waste land—a dry season of naked endurance, without God—had earned him the ordeal with Vivien, but the ordeal with Vivien was to serve both time past and time future. Time past: he would escape from the formless wastes of past metaphysical drift only because Vivien had jolted him into a sense of sin. And time future: only because she had jolted him into a sense of sin would he uncover the means to future absolution—the genuine avowal of himself as sinner. To the inferno of Vivien he owed clarification

Sea Breeze
MOTEL
NO VACANCY
CLOSED FOR THE SEASON

of what had been. To the inferno of Vivien he owed clarification of what might yet be. If Vivien was Eliot's mind, she had lodged Medusa there, and Medusa became both raging muse and purifying savior. She was the motive for exorcism, confession, and penitence. She gave him "Ash Wednesday," a poem of supplication. She gave him "Four Quartets," a subdued lyric of near-forgiveness, with long passages of serenely prosaic lines (occasionally burned out into the monotone of philosophic fatigue), recording the threshold of the shriven soul:

> . . . music heard so deeply
> That it is not heard at all, but you are the music
> While the music lasts. These are only hints and guesses,
> Hints followed by guesses; and the rest
> Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action.
> The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is Incarnation.

What makes such "reading backward" possible, of course, is the biographies. (I have relied on Peter Ackroyd and Lyndall Gordon for much of the narrative of Eliot's life.) Knowledge of the life interprets—decodes—the poems: exactly what Eliot's theory of the objective correlative was designed to prevent. Occasionally, the illuminations cast by reading backward provoke the uneasy effect of looking through a forbidden keyhole with a flashlight:

> "My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.
> "Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.
> "What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
> "I never know what you are thinking. Think."
>
> I think we are in rats' alley
> Where the dead men lost their bones.

That, wailing out of a jagged interval in "The Waste Land," can only be Vivien's hysteria and Eliot's recoil from it. But it hardly requires such explicitness (and there is little else that is so clearly explicit) to recognize that his biographers have broken the code of Eliot's reticence—the programmatic reticence embodied in his doctrine of impersonality. The objective correlative was intended to direct the reader to a symbolic stand-in for the poet's personal suffering—not Vivien but Tiresias. Secret becomes metaphor. Eliot's biographers begin with the metaphor and unveil the secret. When the personal is exposed, the objective correlative is annihilated.

And yet the objective correlative has won out, after all, in a larger way. If "The Waste Land" can no longer hide its sources in Eliot's private malaise, it has formidably sufficed as an "objective equivalence" for the public malaise of generations. Its evocations of ruin, loss, lamentation, its "empty cisterns and exhausted wells," are broken sketches of the discontents that remain when the traditional props of civilization have failed: for some (unquestionably for Eliot), a world without God; for others, a world without so much as an illusion of intelligibility or restraint. In 1867, contemplating the Victorian crisis of faith, Matthew Arnold saw "a darkling plain . . . where ignorant armies clash by night," but in Eliot's echoing "arid plain" there is nothing so substantial as even a clash—only formlessness, "hooded hordes swarming," "falling towers." Hallucination succeeds hallucination, until all the crowns of civilization—"Jerusalem Athens Alexandria / Vienna London"—are understood to be "unreal."

In 1922 (a postwar time of mass unemployment, economic disintegration, and political uncertainty), "The Waste Land" fell out upon its era as the shattered incarnation of dissolution, the very text and texture of modernism—modernism's consummate document and ode. In the almost seventy years since its first publication, it has taken on, as the great poems do (but not the very greatest), a bloom of triteness (as ripe truth can overmature into truism). It is no more "coherent" to its newest readers than it was to its astonished earliest readers, but it is much less difficult: tone and technique no longer startle. Post-Bomb, post-Holocaust, post-moonwalk, it may actually be too tame a poem to answer to the mindscape we now know more exhaustively than Eliot did. Professor Harry Levin, Harvard's eminent pioneer promulgator of Proust, Joyce, and Eliot, quipped a little while ago—not altogether playfully—that modernism "has become old-fashioned." "The Waste Land" is not yet an old-fashioned poem, and doubtless never will be. But it does not address with the same exigency the sons and daughters of those impassioned readers who ecstatically intoned it three and four decades ago, in the belief that infiltration by those syllables was an aesthetic sacrament. Even for the aging generation

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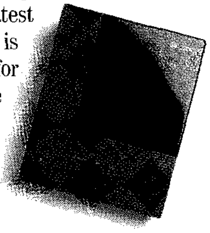

Want even more freedom? The latest answer from Southwestern Bell is the FA-1525 Telephone Answering Machine. Features dual-cassette operation for quality recording. Pick up any household extension and auto-disconnect feature interrupts outgoing message and resets tape. Beeper or beeperless remote operation, so you'll never miss an important call. Plus two-way record for conversations, call screening, household memo function and voice-activated record. Soft-touch keys are designed for easy operation. **$129.95** #2141.

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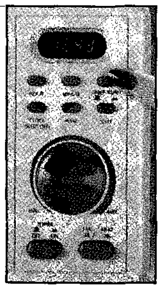
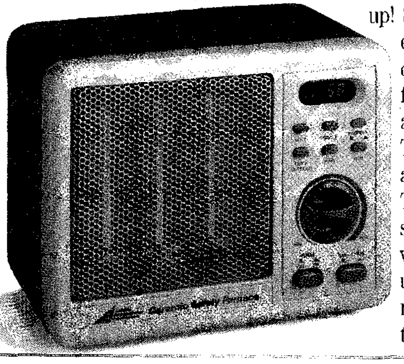
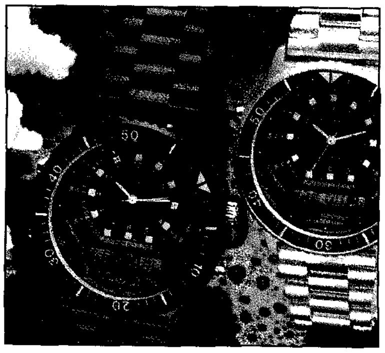


Ceramic heaters are safe (their heating elements actually operate below the ignition point of tissue paper), compact, energy-efficient and capable of keeping you toasty-warm. The first thing you notice about The Timer™ from Aladdin is that it looks more like a clock radio than a 1500-watt ceramic heater. Aladdin took the most advanced ceramic heating technology available, then added something *none* of its competitors have: an easy-to-use, programmable timer with a built-in, illuminated digital clock — that can be set to wake you to warmth, much as a clock radio wakes you to music! This unique design is the perfect way to illustrate the remarkable difference between the programmable Aladdin heater and other ceramic cube heaters. Now, the days of waking up shivering because you turned down the heat at bedtime are over! No more jumping into a hot shower because you can't stand your cold bathroom floor, either. Just set The Timer to turn the heat on automatically before you wake up! Set it once, and it will come on at the same time every morning, operate for two hours then shut itself off. Or, use the ingenious "sleep" button so you can fall asleep in luxurious warmth then have the heater automatically shut itself off after one hour! The Timer heater provides safe, comfortable warmth in any room when and where you need it. Because The Timer can be programmed and is smart enough to shut itself off, operating costs stay low and no wasted energy is spent on warming rooms not in use. And for even greater safety, it has an automatic tip-over safety switch. UL listed. Manufacturer's 5-yr. limited warranty. **$159.95** #2750.



A WATCH FOR ALL REASONS



This handsome digital-analog chronometer will swim with you (to a depth of 150 feet), fly with you, calculate your speed, wake you in the morning, and tell you the day and date. A push of a button will convert the digital display to 24-hour timekeeping. All functions—digital and analog timekeeping, calendar, alarm, chronometer and tachymeter—are powered by a highly accurate electronic quartz movement. The analog hands and hour markers are luminous. The stopwatch times to ¹⁄₁₀₀th of a second, and the rotating bezel can be used for such practical matters as telling you when the parking meter will need another quarter. Adjustable fit. **$39.95**. Teflon-coated durable black-matte anodized stainless steel #1051. Stainless steel and gold-plated #1061.

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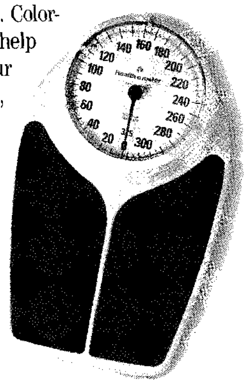

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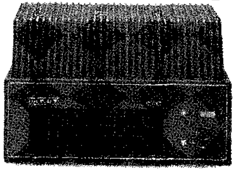

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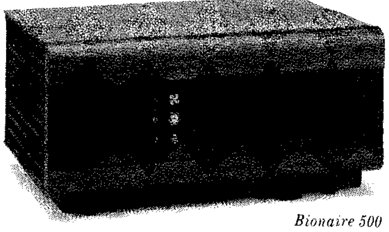

Bionaire 500

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One of your child's fondest memories will be the thrill of having driven this hot, pedal-powered racing car on the fast track to make-believe. Safe and easy to handle, the Kettcar Grand Prix is precision-engineered as you'd expect from German designers. With a chain drive mechanism that's completely enclosed, intercooled and foot injected with an overhead hand-powered plant and four-wheel drive that takes it from 0 to 10 fast. The rugged tubular steel frame finished with tough enamel puts all those plastic kiddy cars to shame. Sport wheels have wide-tread rubber tires to hold the road, sidewalk or playroom. Racing-style steering wheel gives positive control and freewheeling allows coasting without danger of spinning pedals. Quick-action pull-up hand brake assures safe stops. Adjustable seat accommodates growth from ages 3 to 9. Kettcar is one of those rare gifts of quality built for years of fun and excitement. Minimal assembly, ready to ride in minutes. **$99.95** #2271.

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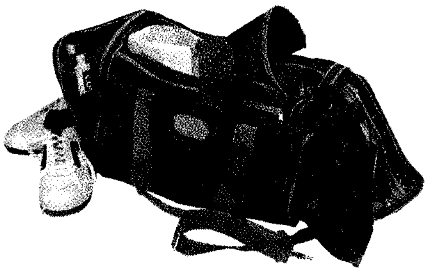

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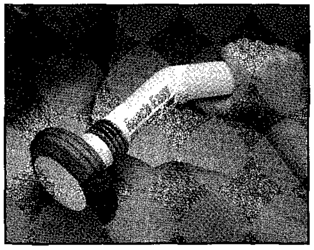
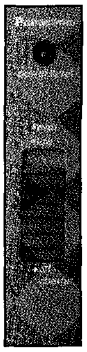


Pamper yourself after a hard day's work or a vigorous workout with the two-speed Reach Easy Rechargeable Massager. The convenient angled design with comfortable, ribbed handle relaxes your tired, aching muscles — even in hard-to-reach places. *And there's no cord to get in your way!* Three surfaces offer spot, concentrated or full-surface massage. The raised point surface relieves tension in your neck...the ribbed surface for the area between your shoulder blades...and the flat round surface for your middle and lower back. The powerful but quiet motor in the massage head means less effort for you with no loss of intensity. Massages up to 60 minutes after a full charge. Power level indicator. Charger included. UL listed. Manufacturer's 1-yr. limited warranty, 13⅝″ long, 19.8 ozs. **$69.95** #2820.



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Imagine not having to buy another set of knives...being able to bone chickens, carve turkeys and steak, slice bread and pare vegetables for the next 30 years...without ever having to sharpen them! The TriStar® 15-Piece Cutlery Set carries a limited 30-yr. warranty — these knives are made sharp to stay sharp! Each no-rust surgical stainless steel blade combines angles, scalloping and serrating. The secret is a carefully researched design patent that includes a two-piece construction, permanently sealing the blades to the black polypropylene handles, making them durable, hygienic, easy to clean and comfortable to hold. Non-slip bolsters on the handles act as safety guards to protect your fingers. Dishwasher safe. All the knives you'll ever need, plus an 8″ pair of all-purpose deluxe household shears is a natural hardwood counter block. **$49.95** #2760.

Includes:
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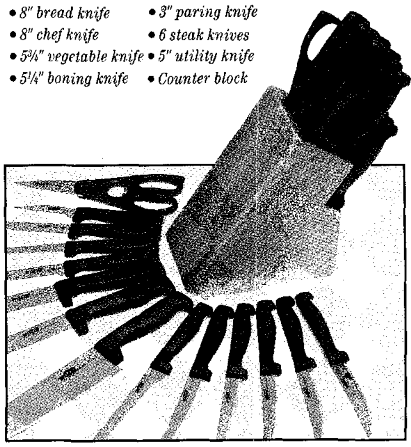
- *6 steak knives*
- *5″ utility knife*
- *Counter block*



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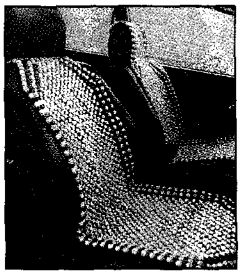
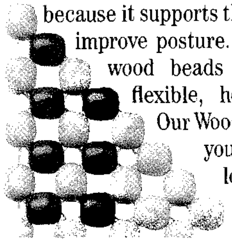
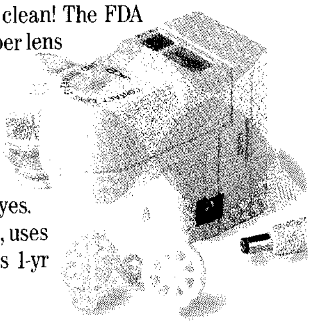


A New York City cab driver tipped us off about the Wooden Bead Seat's "*mystical*" massaging action. It enables you to sit for long periods of time without discomfort or fatigue — whether you're at a desk or in traffic. It works like modern-day acupressure, gently *massaging* your back and legs, stimulating tired muscles and improving circulation. It creates a "zone of comfort" between you and the seat, allowing air to circulate so you stay cool in summer and warm in winter. The Wooden Bead Seat has health benefits, too. It's *recommended* by chiropractors because it supports the lower back and helps improve posture. The smooth lacquered wood beads are handstrung with flexible, heavy-duty nylon cord. Our Wooden Bead Seat will keep you comfortable all year long. **$29.95** #2690; Share the comfort — two for **$49.95** #2700.



TAKE YOUR CONTACTS FOR A SPIN



Contact lenses — so convenient to wear...so *inconvenient* to clean! The FDA found the risk of eye damage to be significantly reduced by proper lens care. The Clensatron™, developed specifically to *minimize* problems of lens care, is clinically proven to offer contact lens wearers an alternative to the traditional, "finger-rubbing" method which can scratch or tear lenses. Revolving at a rate of 150 cycles per minute, it thoroughly scrubs your lenses in *two minutes*, removing protein deposits and other contaminants that may damage your eyes. Works with hard, soft and gas-permeable lenses. Compact for travel, uses two AA batteries. AC adaptor included; UL listed. Manufacturer's 1-yr warranty. **$59.95** #2680.

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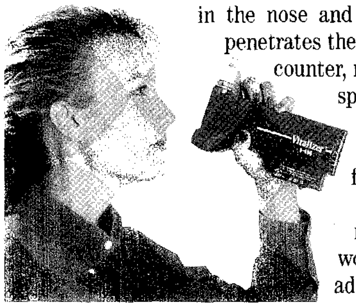
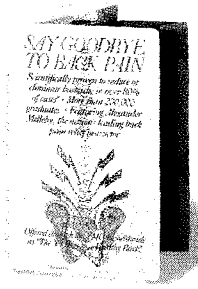


GOODBYE BACK PAIN



More than 6.5 *million* Americans suffer from back pain daily...and more than 8 out of 10 will eventually suffer from it. Research has shown that 83% of back problems are caused by muscles that have become weak due to stress and lack of exercise. But that's actually good news, because it means that most back pain is preventable! The "Say Goodbye to Back Pain" video is derived from the YMCA's "Y's Way to a Healthy Back" program which is based on research by noted back care expert, Dr. Hans Kraus. This doctor-recommended program is used at YMCA's nationwide, and has helped hundreds of thousands of people where other methods have failed. *Scientifically proven* to reduce or *eliminate* back pain in more than 80% of cases. Consult your doctor before beginning this six-week program of easy, relaxing and amazingly effective exercises which will help restore the strength and flexibility of your back...no matter how long you've neglected it. 96 minutes. **$39.95** #2370.

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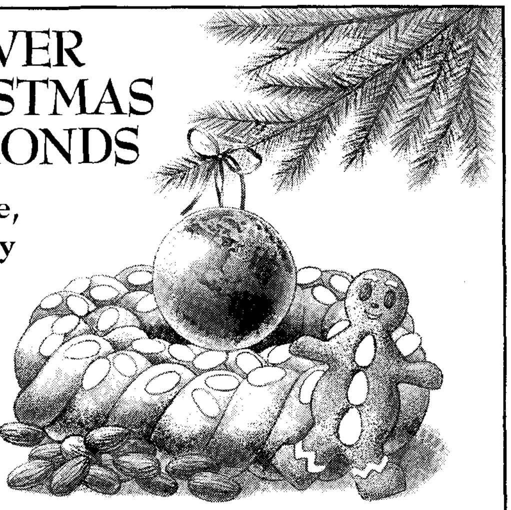
Please allow 4 weeks for delivery. 235093 of the formerly impassioned, something has gone out of the poem—not out of "The Waste Land" proper, perhaps, but rather out of that parallel work Eliot called "Notes on 'The Waste Land.' " This was the renowned mock-scholarly apparatus Eliot tacked on to the body of the poem, ostensibly to spell out its multiple allusions: a contrivance that once seemed very nearly a separate set of modernist stanzas—arbitrary, fragmented, dissonant, and, above all, solemnly erudite. "The whole passage from Ovid," drones the sober professorial persona of the "Notes," "is of great anthropological interest." There follow nineteen lines of Latin verse. The procession of brilliantly variegated citations—Augustine, the Upanishads, Verlaine, Baudelaire, Hermann Hesse, Shakespeare, tarot cards, the Grail legend—suggests (according to Professor Levin) that context was to Eliot what conceit was to the metaphysical poets. A fresh reading of the "Notes" admits to something else—the thumbed nose, that vein in Eliot of the practical joker, released through Macavity the Mystery Cat and in masses of unpublished bawdy verses (nowadays we might regard them as more racist than bawdy) starring "King Bolo's big black bassturd kween." In any case, whatever pose Eliot intended, no one can come on the "Notes" today with the old worshipful gravity. They seem drained of austerity—so emphatically serious that it is hard to take them seriously at all.

The same with the plays. With the exception of the first of the five, "Murder in the Cathedral"—a major devotional poem of orchestral breadth—the plays are all collapsed into curios. From our perspective, they are something worse than period pieces, since that is what they were—Edwardian drawing-room dramas—when they were new. They hint at (or proclaim) a failure of Eliot's public ear. His aim was to write popular verse plays for the English stage—an aim worthy (though Eliot never had the hubris to say this) of Shakespeare. George Bernard Shaw had been content with prose—and the majestically cunning prose speeches in "Murder in the Cathedral" are reminiscent of nothing so much as Shaw's "Saint Joan," including Shaw's preface to that play. The dialogue of enjambment that is the style and method



THE WORLD OVER IT'S NOT CHRISTMAS WITHOUT ALMONDS

Whatever your heritage, your traditional holiday confections probably use almonds.

German lebkuchen, spicy cookies dating back to the Romans. Italian panforte di Siena, a candy specialty since the Renaissance. Sicilian torrone. English mincemeats and puddings. Austrian and Czech braided breads. Irish fruited gingerbread. Latin American empañaditas. They're all made with almonds.

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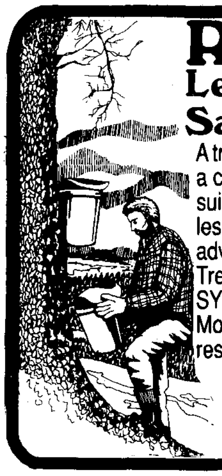

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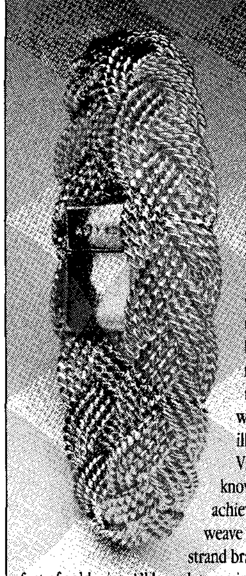

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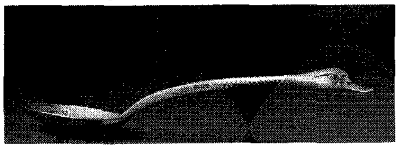

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of "The Cocktail Party," "The Confidential Clerk," and "The Elder Statesman" never attains the sound of verse, much less poetry. That was precisely Eliot's hope: he considered "Murder in the Cathedral" too blatantly poetic, a "dead end." His goal was to bury the overt effects of poetry while drawing out of ordinary speech and almost ordinary situations a veil of transcendence—even, now and then, of mystical horror, as when (in "The Family Reunion") the Furies suddenly appear, or when (in "The Cocktail Party") a character we are meant to imagine as a saint and a martyr goes off to be a missionary among the "natives" and is eaten by ants (having first been crucified, it ought to be added); and though there are farcical moments throughout, the devouring anthill is not intended as one of them. Nevertheless, nothing transcendent manages to rise from any printed page of any of Eliot's last four plays—almost nothing suggestive of poetry, in fact, except an occasional "wisdom" patch in the semi-lyrical but largely prosy manner of the philosophical lines in "Four Quartets." Possibly that is because the printed page is perforce bare of technical stagecraft, with its color and excitement. Yet, similarly unaccoutred, Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Shaw, in their greater and lesser written art, send out language powerful enough to equal absent actors, sets, lighting, costumes. Much of Eliot's dialogue, instead of achieving that simplicity of common speech he aspired to, plummets to the stilted, the pedestrian, the enervated:

> Oh, Edward, when you were a little
>   boy,
> I'm sure you were
>   always getting yourself measured
> To prove how you had grown since
>   the last holidays.
> You were always intensely con-
>   cerned with yourself;
> And if other people grow, well, you
>   want to grow too.

Given only the text, and nothing else, a reader of "The Cocktail Party," say, will be perplexed by its extravagant performing history: in London and New York in the fifties, it filled theatres and stunned audiences. Read now, these later plays are unmistakably dead, embalmed, dated beyond endurance—dated, especially, in the light of the vigorous fifties, when the energetic spokesmen of the Angry Young Men were having their first dramatic hearing. As playwright, Eliot inexplicably eschewed or diluted or could not pull off his theory of demarcation between "the man who suffers and the mind which creates," so the plays are surprisingly confessional: the Furies harbor Vivien, a character is tormented by thinking he has killed his wife, Valerie turns up as a redemptive young woman piously named Monica, etc. Since Eliot's private life was not only closed but unguessed at in those years, gossip could not have been the lure for theatregoers. They came because of the supremacy of Eliot's fame. They came because verse drama by T. S. Eliot was the most potent cultural vitamin of the age.

INEVITABLY, we are returned to the issue (there is no escaping it at any point) of Eliot's renown. As a young man, he had hammered out the prestige of a critical reputation by means of essay after essay. By the time of the later plays, he had become a world celebrity, an international feature story in newspapers and magazines. But neither the essays by themselves nor (certainly) the plays—always excepting "Murder in the Cathedral," which ought to count among the most lastingly resonant of the poems—could have won for Eliot his permanent place in English letters. The fame belongs to the poems. The rest, however much there might be of it, was spinoff. Yet the body of poems is amazingly small in the light of Eliot's towering repute. In 1958, for example, invited to Rome for an honorary degree, he was driven through streets mobbed with students roaring "*Viva Eliot!*" Mass adulation of this sort more often attaches to Presidents and monarchs—or, nowadays, to rock stars. What did that roar rest on? Leaving aside the early Bolo ribaldry (which, in any case, never reached print), the fourteen cat verses, and the contents of a little collection called "Poems Written in Early Youth" (from ages sixteen to twenty-one), but not omitting two unfinished works—"Sweeney Agonistes" and "Coriolan"—Eliot's entire poetic œuvre comes to fifty-four poems. England, at least, is used to more abundant output from the poets it chooses to mark with the seal of permanence. My copy of Wordsworth's "Poetical Works" has nine hundred

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and sixty-six pages of minuscule type, or approximately a thousand poems. The changes in the written culture between, say, the "Intimations of Immortality," published in 1807, and Eliot's "Waste Land," published a hundred and fifteen years later, speak for themselves. Still, granting the impertinence of measuring by number, there remains something extraordinary—even uncanny—about the torrent of transoceanic veneration that stemmed from fifty-four poems.

Eliot may have supposed himself a classicist, but in actuality he is subjective, anguished, nostalgic, mystical, lyrical. The critic Harold Bloom's mild view is that he "does not derive from Dante and Donne, as he thought, but from Tennyson and Whitman"—a judgment that might have stung him. For Eliot to have believed himself an offspring of the cosmic Dante and the precision worker Donne and to end, if Professor Bloom is correct, as a descendant of the softer, lusher music of Tennyson is no serious diminishment (Tennyson is permanent, too), but it *is* a diminishment. Lord Tennyson, the British Empire's laureate, may have seemed a weighty and universal voice to the Victorians. To us he is lighter and more parochial. It is in the nature of fame to undergo revision: Eliot appears now to be similarly receding into the parochial, even the sectarian (unlike the all-embracing Whitman, with whom he shares the gift of bel canto). His reach, once broad enough to incorporate the Upanishads, shrank to extend no farther than the neighborhood sacristy, and to a still smaller space: the closet of the self. His worship was local and exclusionary not simply in the limited sense that it expressed an astringent clerical bias or that he observed the forms of a narrow segment of the Church of England—itself an island church, after all, though he did his best to link it with what he termed "the Universal Church in the World." What made Eliot's religiosity local and exclusionary was that he confined it to his personal pain and bitterness—he allowed himself to become estranged from humanity. Feeling corrupt in himself, he saw corruption everywhere. "All times are corrupt," he wrote, and, again, "The whole of modern literature is corrupted by what I call Secularism." Demanding that faith—a particular credo—be recognized as the

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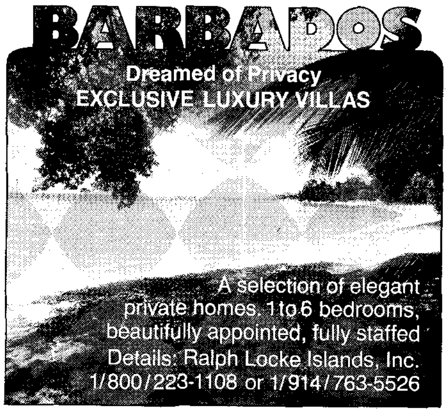
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foundation of civilization, he went on to define civilization while omitting some of its highest Western manifestations: the principles of democracy, tolerance, and individualism. Despite his youthful study of Eastern religion and his poet's immersion in Hebrew scripture, he was finally unable to imagine that there might be rival structures of civilization, not grounded in the doctrine of original sin and yet intellectually and metaphysically exemplary. Even within the familial household of Christendom he was quick to cry heretic. In any event, the style of his orthodoxy was, as Harry Levin put it, "a literary conception." As a would-be social theorist, he had a backward longing for the medieval hegemony of cathedral spires—for a closed society. It was a ruefulness so poignant that it preoccupied much of the prose and seeped into the melancholy cadences of the poetry. As a modernist, Eliot was the last of the Romantics.

In the end, he could not disengage the mind that created from the man who suffered; they were inseparable. But the mind and the man—the genius and the sufferer—had contributed, in influence and authority, more than any other mind and man (with the exception, perhaps, of Picasso) to the formation of the most significant aesthetic movement of the twentieth century. It was a movement so formidable that its putative successor cannot shake off its effects and is obliged to carry on its name; helplessly, we speak of the "postmodern." Whether postmodernism is genuinely a successor or merely an updated variant of modernism remains unresolved. Yet, whichever it turns out to be, we do know for certain that we no longer live in the literary shadow of T. S. Eliot. "Mistah Kurtz—he dead," the celebrated epigraph that Eliot lifted from Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" and affixed to "The Hollow Men," applies: the heart has gone out of what once ruled. High art is dead. The passion for inheritance is dead. Tradition is equated with obscurantism. The wall that divided serious high culture from the popular arts is breached; anything can count as "text." Knowledge—saturated in historical memory—is displaced by information, or memory without history: data. Allusiveness is cross-cultural in an informational and contemporary way (from, say, beekeeping to filmmaking), rather than in the sense of

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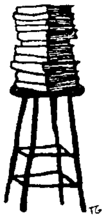

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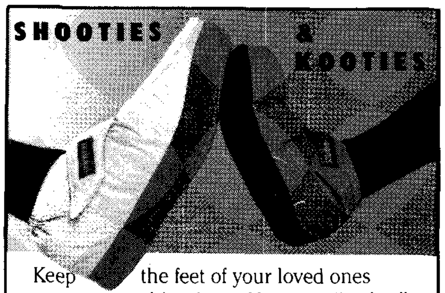

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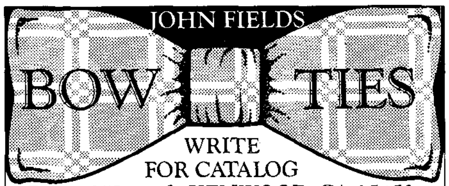

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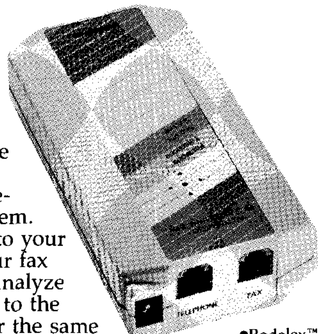
connecting the present with the past. The relation of poets to history is that they can take it or leave it, and mostly they leave it, whether in prosody or in the idea of the venerable. If it is true that "The Waste Land" could not be written today, because it is too tame for the savagery we have since accumulated, there is also a more compelling truth: because we seem content to live without contemplation of our formal beginnings, a poem like "The Waste Land," mourning the loss of an integral tradition, is for us inconceivable. For the modernists, the center notoriously did not hold; for us (whatever *we* are), there is no recollection of a center, and nothing to miss, let alone mourn.

Was it the ever-increasing rush to what Eliot called "Secularism" that knocked him off his pinnacle? Was it the vague nihilism of "modern life" that deposed modernism's prophet? Was Eliot shrugged off because his pessimistic longings were ultimately judged to be beside the point? The answer may not be as clear-cut as any of that. The historical and cultural changes that occurred in the forty years between the Nobel award in 1948 and Eliot's centennial in 1988 have still not been assimilated, or even remotely understood. The Wordsworth of the "Ode to Duty" (published the same year as "Intimations of Immortality") has more in common with the Eliot of "Four Quartets"—the differing idioms of the poetry aside—than Eliot has with Allen Ginsberg. And yet Ginsberg's "Howl," the single poem most representative of the break with Eliot, may owe as much, thematically, to "The Waste Land" as it does to the bardic Whitman or to the opening of the era of anything goes. Ginsberg belongs to the generation that knew Eliot as sanctified, and, despite every irruption into indiscipline, Eliot continues alive in Ginsberg's ear. For the rest, a look at the condition of most poetry in America today will disclose how far behind we have left Eliot. William Carlos Williams, a rival of Eliot's engaged in another vein of diction and committed to sharply contrasting aesthetic goals ("no ideas but in things"), said of the publication of "The Waste Land," "I felt at once that it had set me back twenty years," largely because of its European gravity of erudition. The newest generation in the line of descent from Williams,



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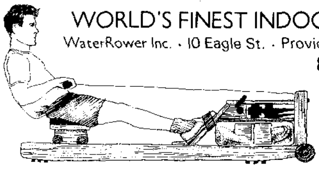

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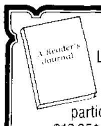

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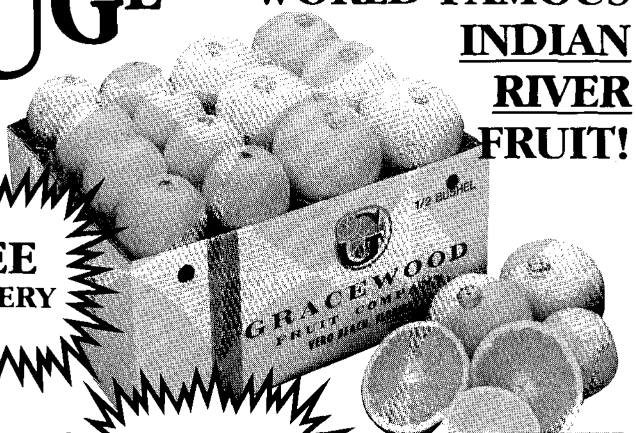

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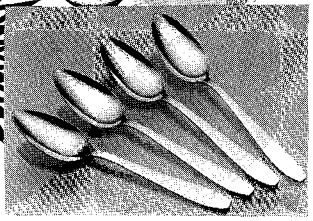

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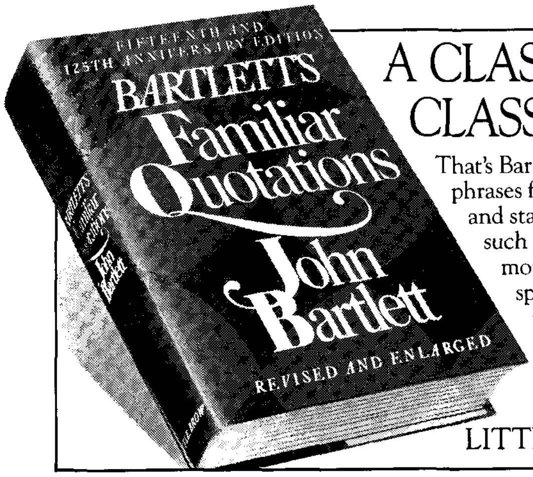

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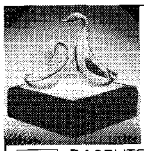

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though hardly aware of its own ancestry, follows Williams in repudiating Eliot: music is not wanted, history is not wanted, idea is not wanted. Even literature is not much wanted. What *is* wanted is a sort of verbal snapshot: the quick impression, the short, flat snippet that sounds cut from a sentence in a letter to a friend, the casual and scanty "revelation." As Eliot in his time spurned Milton's exalted epic line as too sublime for his need, so now Eliot's elegiac fragments appear too arcane, too aristocratic, and too difficult for contemporary ambition. Ironic allusiveness—Eliot's inspired borrowing—is out of the question; there is nothing in stock to allude to. Now and then, there are signs—critical complaints and boredom—that the school of pedestrian verse-making is nearly exhausted, and more and more there are poets who are venturing into the longer line, the denser stanza, a more intense, if not a heightened, diction.

But the chief elements of the Age of Eliot are no longer with us, and may never return: the belief that poetry can be redemptive; the conviction that history underlies poetry. Such notions may still be intrinsic to the work of Joseph Brodsky and Czeslaw Milosz—Europeans resident in America. Eliot was an American resident in Europe. Even as he was exacting from both his poetry and his life a perfected impersonation of the European model, he was sometimes signing himself, in letters, Metoikos, the Greek word for resident alien. He knew he was a contradiction. And it may be simply that it is in the renunciatory grain of America to resist the hierarchical and the traditional. Eliot's "high culture" and its regnancy in and beyond the American university may have been an unsuccessful transplant that "took" temporarily but in the end would be rejected by the formation of natural tissue. Or, as Eliot himself predicted in "The Dry Salvages" section of "Four Quartets," "We had the experience but missed the meaning." For the generation (my own) for whom Eliot was once a god, the truth is that we had the experience and were irradiated by the meaning. In the wake of the last forty years, it is now our unsparing obligation to disclaim the reactionary Eliot. What we will probably go on missing forever is that golden cape of our youth, the power and prestige of high art.

—CYNTHIA OZICK

BOOKS

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

Lost in the City of Light, by Richard de Combray (Knopf; $17.95). The city of light in which Kevin Korlov gets lost is the screen that flickers with the pseudonyms of lonely hearts typing in to a computerized personals service. He does live in Paris, where he tries "to take his portions of solitude respectfully," and where the lights for this American are likely to be the traffic signals that all turn from green and red to amber after midnight. As a more or less failed sculptor, an English-language teacher, a free-lance radio announcer, a failed lover, he is "beset by worries, a lavish entertainment he allowed himself more frequently than might have been provident." One is entertained by worrying for him when he falls for a creature so seemingly full of sunlight and starshine that he cannot understand what she was doing entering pseudonyms in the Minitel at 4 A.M. For the reader, she has all the allure of a glaring flashlight, and one starts to wonder how a writer so good at describing can be so off in his dialogue. It is a relief to learn at the end that Kevin has been no more taken in than we were, but was only looking to rescue someone more lost than himself.

GENERAL

Friends of Promise: Cyril Connolly and the World of Horizon, by Michael Shelden (Harper & Row; $24.95). A history of the British magazine *Horizon*, and a portrait of its chief editor, Cyril Connolly. *Horizon*, which came out at the beginning of the Second World War, was designed by its founders—Peter Watson, a wealthy young amateur of the arts; the poet Stephen Spender; and Connolly, a brilliant Bloomsbury gadfly of the intellectual establishment—to be a kind of caretaker of literary English culture. The magazine's office was in Spender's two-room London flat, paper restrictions were severe, and more difficulties (like the blitz) were in the immediate offing, yet the first issue sold out promptly, and circulation reached eight thousand in a few months. Connolly, who was a stickler for high quality in writing, built up an outstanding corps of contributors—among them George Orwell, W. H. Auden, V. S. Pritchett, Dylan Thomas, Elizabeth Bowen. After the war, changing conditions in England and Connolly's flagging enthusiasm for hard work spelled decline for *Horizon;* even so, the magazine continued until 1949. This is a first-rate piece of writing and scholarship by a young American professor of English. Photographs.

Maasai Days, by Cheryl Bentsen (Summit; $19.95). The author, a journalist, spent several years wandering in and out of the lives of a group of Maasai, the semi-nomadic people of East Africa, getting to know elders, warriors, mothers, and teen-agers as one might get to know one's neighbors in a small town. She commiserates with women about their drunken husbands and talks with adolescent girls about why they submit to painful circumcision; without being patronizing, she helps her Maasai friends with everything from land disputes to school problems. This book makes no pretensions of being anthropological or scholarly. It is a verbal home movie, of the lives of people the author obviously cares about. Ms. Bentsen doesn't preach, but the Maasai life she portrays, or, at least, parts of it—corrupt leaders; drunkenness; violence, especially to women; lack of education—should be sobering for those Westerners who wish to keep the Maasai as they are: in their colorful *shukas*, with their earlobes stretched and their bodies covered in ochre, roaming with their cattle over desolate land.

Fabricating Lives: Explorations in American Autobiography, by Herbert Leibowitz (Knopf; $24.95). A humane and knowing critic examines the ways that some Americans have presented themselves to the reading public. The gallery starts in the eighteenth century and

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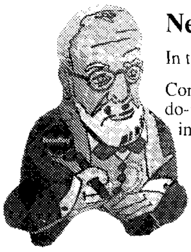

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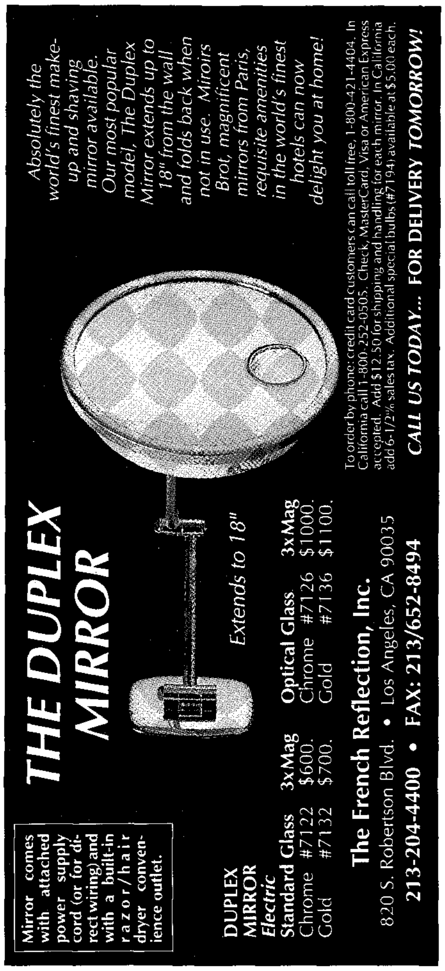

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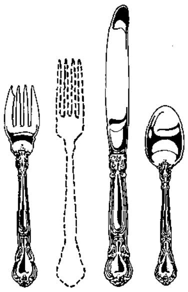

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comes down nearly to the present. Benjamin Franklin pleased multitudes by telling his life as the quintessential success story, but Mr. Leibowitz reminds us that other autobiographers were less worldly: Jonathan Edwards' "Personal Narrative" is concerned with its author's relation to God, while Louis Sullivan's "The Autobiography of an Idea" justifies a gifted failure. Though there are obvious contrasts—between, say, Virgil Thomson's matter-of-fact word portrait of Kansas City and Edward Dahlberg's romantic one—and recurring themes, such as fear of intimacy and a yearning for appreciation, the emphasis here is on individuality. Circumstances and temperaments guarantee diversity, and Mr. Leibowitz shows us how each autobiographer illuminates himself, his time, and the other Americans in this volume.

JERUSALEM: CITY OF MIRRORS, by Amos Elon (Little, Brown; $19.95). A portrayal of what the author calls "a city of never-ending solemnities," which encompasses history, myths, politics, literature, and archeology. The book is a superb guide to the physical Jerusalem and its four quarters—Christian, Muslim, Jewish, and Armenian—and it is also a work of poetic feeling, and art. Jerusalem, Mr. Elon says, is a city at war with itself, where religion and nationalism have come to mean almost the same thing, where "one hates one's fellow man to the glory of God." It is a place of great beauty, which has been sacked and destroyed many times, yet survives. And today, Mr. Elon says, when two national capitals coexist for the first time in history, representing two seemingly irreconcilable religious philosophies, it is as far from peace as ever. A memorable book, which goes a long way toward explaining Jerusalem's hold on the world's imagination.

•

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[*Blondell Rice in the Alamo* (*Tenn.*) *Crockett Times*]

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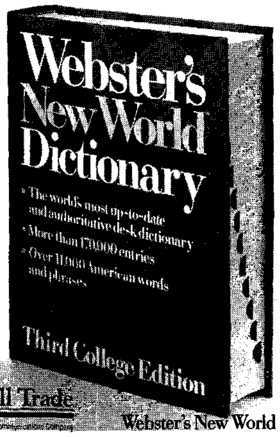

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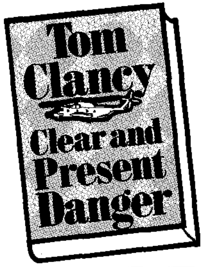

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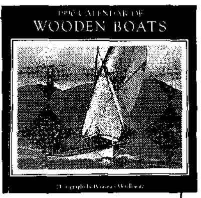

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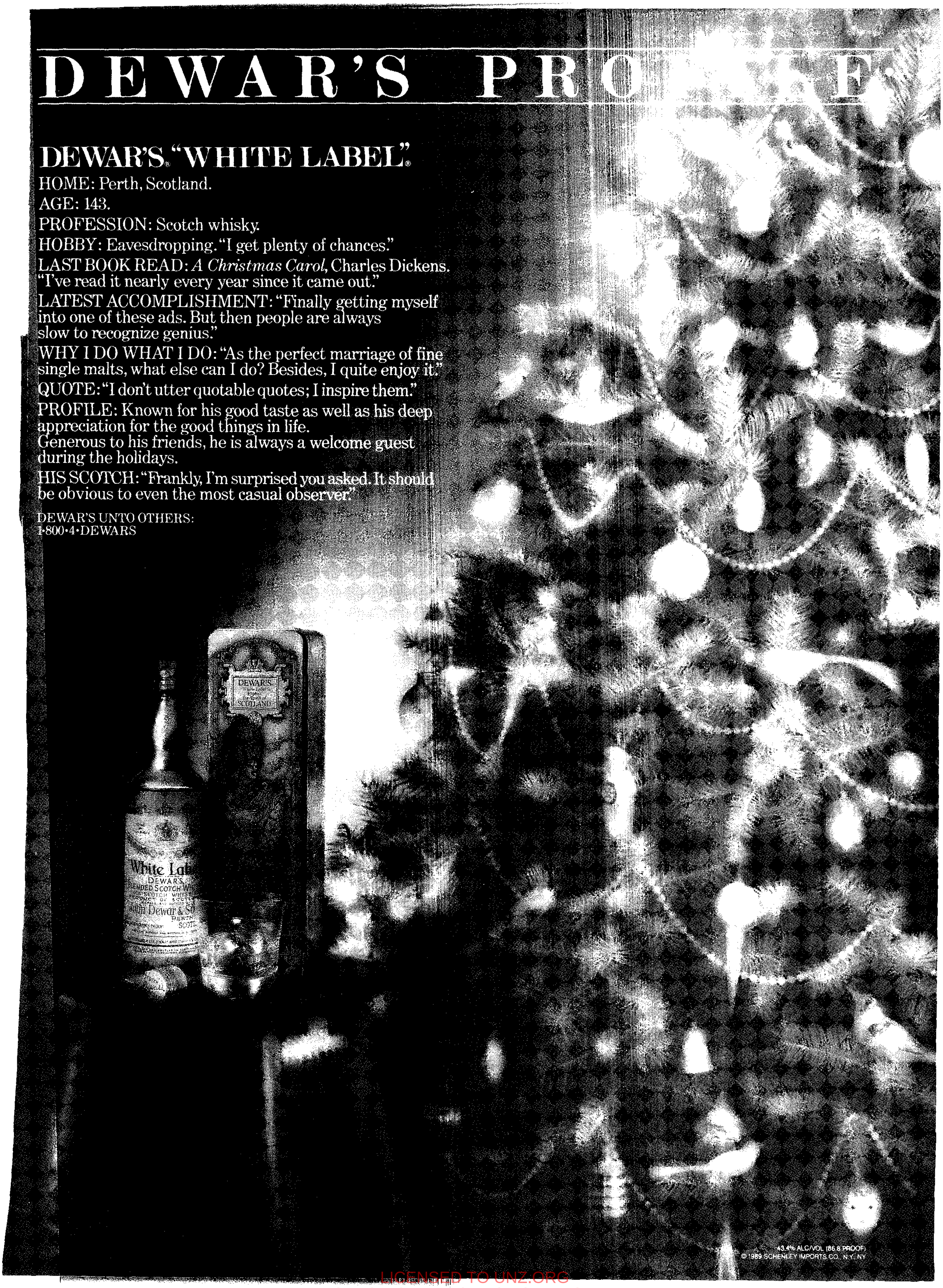
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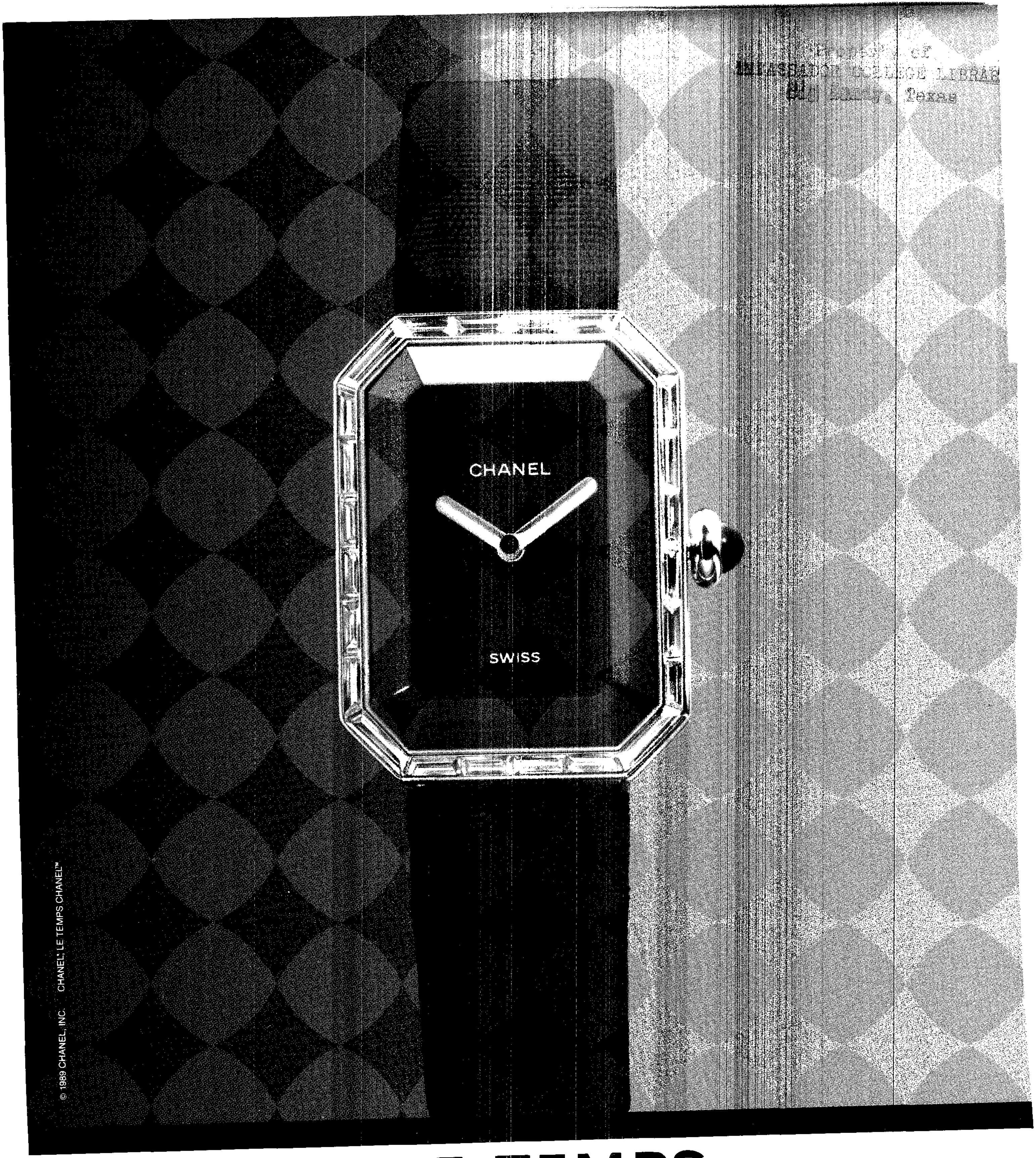

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